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The Story of
Chinese Gardens

By LIONEL BAKER

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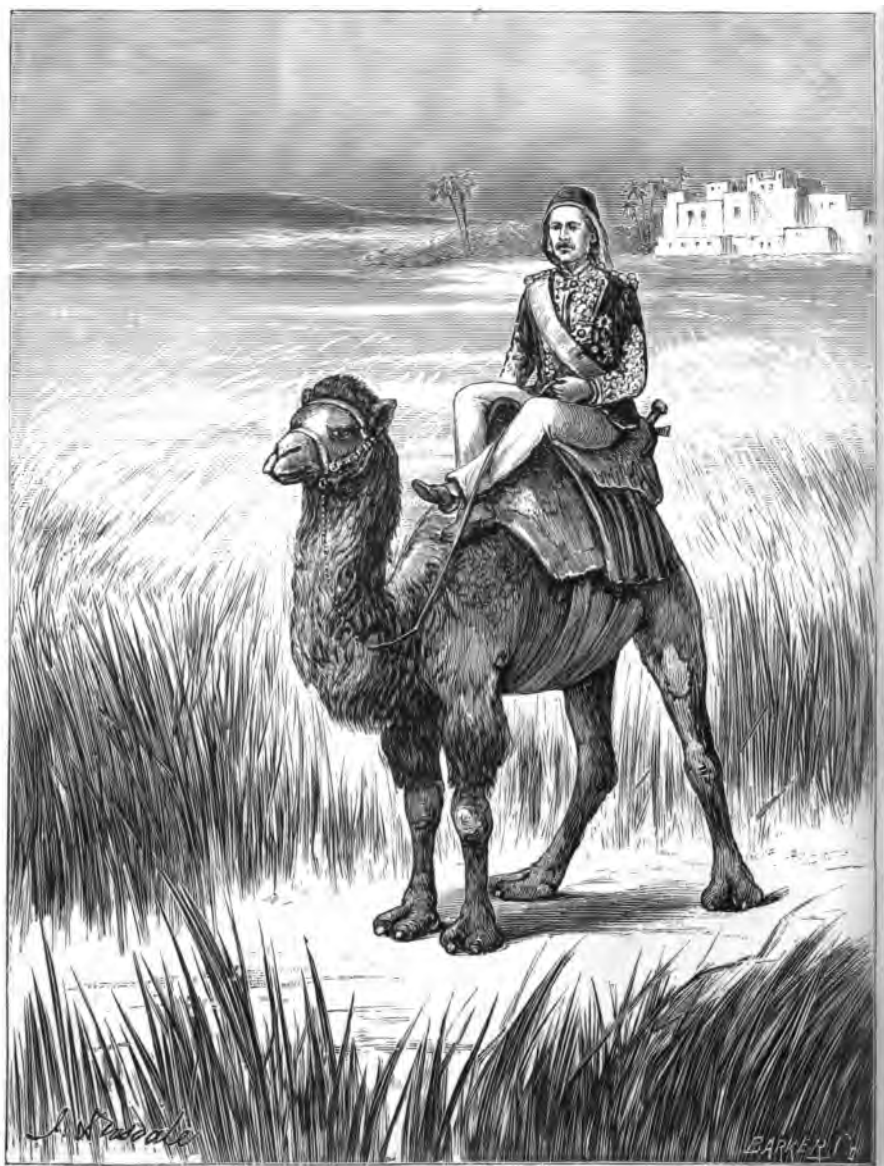
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“Now that I am launched again into these solitudes, and with those extraordinary animals (the camel), I think over my position.”

EXTRACT FROM ONE OF GORDON'S LETTERS.

STORY OF CHINA

*China's story is a story of a people who have
lived for centuries in a land of great beauty and
richness, and who have made a name for themselves
in the world by their wisdom and their courage.*

WITH PORTRAITS AND MAPS.

SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON:
REMINGTON AND CO.,
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1885.

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THE
STORY OF CHINESE GORDON.

BY

A. EGMONT HAKE,

AUTHOR OF 'PARIS ORIGINALS,' 'FLATTERING TALES,' ETC.

"One honest man, one wise man, one peaceful man commands a hundred millions, without a baton and without a charger. He wants no fortress to protect him: he stands higher than any citadel can raise him, brightly conspicuous to the most distant nations, God's servant by election, God's image by beneficence."

LANDOR.

WITH PORTRAITS AND MAPS.

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NOTE.—In reading the following pages it should be noted that the greater part of this work was written and passed for press before the Fall of Khartoum.



THE STORY OF CHINESE GORDON.

SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

SLAVERY IN THE SOUDAN.

THE origin of the Taeping Rebellion is much akin to that of the rebellion in the Soudan, and the history of Hung-tsu-en, the Heavenly King, is not unlike the origin of Mahomet Achmet, the False Prophet : both being dreamers and both enthusiasts, both proclaiming peace and plenty in the future which meant war and famine in the present, and both acting under the impulse of troops of rascals who had some unholy end to gain. Then, the countries which represented their separate scenes of action had much in common : in the one the people were oppressed by the Mandarins, in the other by the Turkish and Egyptian officials, the oppression taking the common form of extortion, which was equiva-

lent to starvation. Thus the poorer populations of these two vast countries were ready to accept any prospect of freedom, however distant, any scheme for restitution of rights, however wild: no lie was too open, no excuse too shallow, no superstition too monstrous, and it was upon material such as this that the Heavenly King and the False Prophet had to work. While their exhortations and denunciations were confined to points of religion and religious observance, their followers were confined to kinsmen and personal friends; but with the advancement of political interests, introduced by political rascals, came a sudden change; a feeble flame was fanned into a sweeping fire, and religious enthusiasm became the mask for two of the most gigantic political demonstrations the world has seen during the last ten centuries. It has fallen to one man to play the principal part in the suppression of these two rebellions. That man is Chinese Gordon.

The element of slavery is so inextricably involved in the past and present development of the Soudan that it is worth while to take a fairly comprehensive glance at the whole slave question. It is a drama of many scenes, each and all so interdependent that unless they are followed step by step from the curtain's rise, the whole effect must be vague, hazy, and in-

complete. The story is one rich in plot and counter-plot: it tells of a struggle of ancient rights against new pretensions; of interminable strife, darkened by unhallowed feats in persecution, pillage, and treachery; of a battle-ground on which the deepest degradation of the East and the highest purpose of the West have been opposed; of a transition from peace and plenty to anarchy and despair. And the principal figures and effects are sultans and robber chiefs, armed bands and clouds of runaway blacks, burning villages, and deserts strewn with dead. But there is one light in the utter darkness—the light to which all the has world looked, and is still looking, as the dawn of peace in that troubled land.

By the old Mosaic law slaves were the lawful spoils of war. Christianity preached and battled against this institution with might and main, and civilised Europe eventually declared it an abomination. But the doctrine of Islam, being chiefly based on the Jewish Scriptures, was more conservative, and it sanctioned the sale into bondage of captives taken in war. They have usually been well treated — especially in modern times: the girls were nearly always married, or kept as concubines; the boys and men were chiefly employed in domestic labour, and not infrequently set at

liberty after a time. Thus Moslem slavery in the East contrasted favourably with Christian slavery in the West, and by Christian slavery in the West is meant slavery in America. But abuses crept in as wars died out. With the march of civilisation came the march of civilised rogues and rascals; and the European traders who opened up Central Africa to the traffic in ivory, established a system of slave-dealing hitherto unknown.

Tribal feuds had always produced tribal fights, and captives made therein were sold into slavery here, there, and everywhere; but that, from the Arab point of view, was legitimate enough, and in the ordinary course of things. The European traders introduced an element that was illegitimate and iniquitous. They established the system of kidnapping, and the system of egging on one tribe to make war upon another, the sole object being to make slaves for the market. They organized gangs of bandits, established fortified posts, and became a power. Then came a hue and cry from Europe, and they had to desist. But they had already reaped a royal harvest, to which they now added by selling their innumerable slave stations to the Arab and native chiefs who had co-operated with them. These ruffians arranged with the Egyptian Government for the importation of their

human commodity, and a great impetus was thus given to the trade. With that impetus it developed in every direction ; so that slave-hunters became slave-kings, with regular armies, regal courts, and great riches, and by their raids and ravages turned a country once a garden into a desert.

One of the great slave centres was at Shaka, where a native chieftain, a trader in ivory and a master of many ivory dépôts, well known to Europeans, held supreme sway. This was the notorious Zebehr. Powerful, daring, and ambitious, he saw his opportunities and seized upon them. Having laid his plans, he carried them out on a scale hitherto unattempted. Instead of depending on the chance gains of single kidnappings, he organized an army of man-hunters, furnished them with arms, and despatched them on raiding expeditions. They attacked the villages, plundered the harmless and peaceful tribes, and brought in convoys of slaves. Their victims were sorted, and conveyed across the desert ; while some were enlisted as recruits, and used for future raids. It was not long before Zebehr became a power : his ever-increasing supply of slaves had given birth to a new craft, that of the *jellabs*, or slave-dealers, who came to Shaka for the purchase of slaves, and dragged them along the Nile to the border. These

jellabs, who owed their origin to and depended for their means on the great slave-hunter, before many years visited his *seriba* in crowds. Indeed, according to Dr. Schweinfurth, in 1871, no less than 2,700 of them arrived there, all for the purchase of human wares. All this meant influence and revenue; and Zebehr was not the man to keep it secret. He is described as having held an almost regal court at Shaka, with armed sentries at his tent-door, chained lions in his divans, and all the imposing accessories of wealthy Eastern life. He had reached the zenith of his power. His name was a terror throughout the Soudan. It had travelled even farther, and was rumoured at Cairo. The far-sighted Ismail saw in him a rival and an enemy. He called a Council of his Ministers, and it was decided that steps be taken forthwith to put an end to Zebehr's influence.

An armed force, under one Bellali, an Egyptian General, was sent south: the ostensible reason being that Darfour was in a state of enmity, the real one being to hold Zebehr in check. It was not long before this force came into collision with Zebehr's followers. The slave-hunter hearing of its approach, guessed its object. He collected his armed bands, and engaged the Government troops. He routed them on all sides, killed or captured the

greater number, and left Bellali slain on the field. Then he retired into his old haunts, resumed his practices of kidnapping and plundering, swelling the ranks of his army, and filling his coffers with the proceeds of his trade. Whole villages were laid waste, whole tribes were scattered and left homeless, to suffer, to die, or to pass into everlasting captivity. The suffering blacks cried out for help, for resistance was of no avail: the Soudan was his. Thus, after the defeat of Bellali, the Egyptian Government were confronted by the ogre whose name is Definite Policy. The national watchword, "Bookra" ("to-morrow") was of no good now: either Zebehr was to rule in the Soudan, or a real campaign must be undertaken against him—a campaign involving great expenditure of men and money, without the prospect of anything like a *quid pro quo*. While the Khedive and his Ministers were trying to solve the problem, Zebehr sent down his excuses, and explained what had hitherto appeared inexplicable. In the acceptance of excuse and explanation lay the loophole for escape from the dilemma, and Zebehr might have remained to this day a power in the Soudan had it not been for the Sultan of Darfour. That ruler was the means of bringing about his downfall, though in the act he lost his kingdom and his

life: He had issued an order prohibiting the export of grain, and as Zebehr and his followers were no longer tillers of their own soil, their *seribas* were dependent on the products exported by their neighbours. No neighbour could grow such grain as came from Darfour. Zebehr, therefore, at once moved towards that province; and the Egyptian Government, seeing that it would not do to allow the slave-hunter to conquer Darfour alone, invited his co-operation as the Khedive's ally, and made him a Bey. In this way the war waged against Darfour was made a joint affair: Zebehr attacked on the south, while the Egyptian forces attacked on the north; and it was mainly owing to Zebehr's generalship and bravery that the province was so rapidly subdued. The battle which decided this conquest extinguished the dynasty which had governed Darfour for more than 400 years. The Sultan was shot through the head, and his two sons were cut down over his dead body. Then came annexation, with an effort to administer the conquered country; and it was during this effort that Zebehr clearly showed his hand. He demanded as a right the position of Governor-General. The grounds upon which he made his claim were twofold. First, he could have conquered the country without any help from Egypt, and had intended to do so. Secondly, the

brunt of the fighting had fallen upon him, and the victories were entirely due to his valour and skill. All this was true: so true, indeed, that it decided the Khedive not to give more power to one who had already shown himself so powerful. Zebehr's demand was refused, but he was made a Pasha, and thanked for his services. To be made a Pasha in Egypt is to be made an official whose employment in any capacity is rewarded by a salary of not less than £100 a month. But with that meagre income from the Government a Pasha can often afford to spend £100 a week, and to retire from active service at the end of a few years a wealthy landed proprietor. "Backsheesh" is the influence which brings him prosperity; but his official employment must be one which will command a bribe, or a Pashalik is but an empty title and an empty purse. To Zebehr it meant both, so far as Ismail's Government was concerned; and he looked upon his reward as *nil*. The Governor-Generalship of the Soudan meant money, power, position—everything; and this post Zebehr was determined to have, and at any risk. His first move was to call a meeting of his chiefs, and the place appointed was near a large tree on the left-hand side of the road which runs from El Obeid to Shaka. Here he unfolded his plans, and

made his officers swear upon the Koran to keep the compact they were about to make. The terms of this compact have since been clearly understood, though they have never been actually disclosed. They included a solemn oath under which those present should openly revolt against Egypt when Zebehr bade them; and this oath was formally subscribed by all. His next step was to collect a great sum of money—it is said £100,000; and with this he started for Cairo, intending to see what eloquence could do with the Khedive, and what “backsheesh” could do with his brother Pashas. This was a fatal mistake. He was received as a distinguished guest, was courted, *fêted*, and flattered. The £100,000 gradually slipped into the pockets of the Pashas, who affected to add their eloquence to his in the hope that the Khedive would be persuaded to give him the command he craved. But Ismail had arranged his plans from the day Zebehr left the Bahr-Gazelle; and in his programme Zebehr was never to return to the Soudan. Time passed; argument was met by counter-argument, demands by objections, entreaties by diplomatic promises; but by the time the £100,000 had vanished Zebehr knew he was neither more nor less than a state prisoner, whose very life was in the hands of the man he had

expected to coerce or persuade. Every request that he might be allowed to return to the Soudan, if only for a short time, was met with a polite excuse; and though his captivity was magnificent, he was after all a captive. He was in reality not less a slave than the pampered and petted eunuchs about his own court in the Bahr-Gazelle; not less a slave than the thousand others he had bought, or captured, or sold into bondage.

Meanwhile Gordon, having completed his work in the Equatorial provinces, was appointed Governor-General of the Soudan. There, having administered Khartoum, he determined to strike at the headquarters of slavery, the dens of the hunters, the refuge of the persecuted dealers, whose business had already been broken up and declared illegal. Zebehr was well informed of everything, and the freedom of action and intercourse he was allowed enabled him to send and receive secret messages. When he was made aware of Gordon's intention to strike at the very heart of slavery, he knew that the Governor-General's success would be his ruin, and would sweep away every vestige of a possibility of his return. To destroy the power of the slave-hunters was to destroy the source from which Zebehr and his followers derived their revenue, and this loss of revenue meant loss of territory,

loss of slave-stations, loss of slaves themselves. Possessed of these, Zebehr even in his captivity, was still a power, for he was actively represented by his son Suleiman in the old den at Shaka. Without them, he was an outcast, a pensioner, a nobody. The time for action had arrived, and Zebehr knew how to act. He sent to Suleiman and his henchmen, and commanded them to *put into effect the orders given under the tree*: that is, to revolt against the Egyptian Government, and so keep the oath they had sworn upon the Koran years ago. No sooner was his order received than the slave-hunters rose in open rebellion, and, with Suleiman at their head, took the field against Gordon and the Government troops.

At this time the state of the law on slavery, which has been described as "imperfect," was really in a complete tangle. Gordon had in his possession an order, signed by the Khedive, to "put to death all slave-dealers, or persons taking slaves." He had further the convention, signed at Alexandria, August 4, 1877, which called slave-taking "robbery, with murder;" also the Khedive's decree issued with that convention, commanding the crime to be punished with "five months to five years' imprisonment;" also a telegram from Nubar Pasha stating that "the sale and purchase

of slaves in Egypt was legal." Under confusions and complications such as these a Governor-General of Gordon's stamp was not unlikely to act upon his own judgment and responsibility, and establish laws which he could see put into effect under his personal superintendence, and which should express some definite policy. Having decided that the question of domestic slavery should remain in abeyance for a while, he declared all slave raids abominations and all slave-hunters criminals. How far he was justified in arriving at this decision is perhaps best understood by a glance at the condition of things in Shaka, the stronghold of Zebehr's hordes. Gordon rightly called it the "Cave of Adullam:" for all murderers and robbers were assembled there; and thence they made raids upon the negro tribes, who were caught and sold wholesale to the dealers, to be by them retailed in the various markets, which were numerous and well supported.

At Shaka there were three or four thousand slaves on sale, and there was an army eight or ten thousand strong used for slave-hunting, and ready to oppose anyone who interfered with their privilege. Suleiman, the son of Zebehr, was the representative head; and as the Khedive governs through his Ministers, so Suleiman governed through his chiefs.

The town of Shaka was actually larger than El-Obeid, the capital of Kordofan; it was well-fortified to boot; and the army, chiefly composed of slaves, captured at an early age, and trained as warriors by Zebehr before he left for Cairo, was well up to its work, and of exemplary activity. The country was a waste, for there was no one to till the ground; the neighbouring tribes, such as those at Razagat, only dared to grow sufficient grain to feed their own families from month to month, for their territory was subject to raid after raid for the purpose of fresh captures. The lives of the slaves may be divided into three distinct periods, dating from the time of bondage. At Shaka they were well treated; like the cattle they resembled, the better their condition the higher their market value. The second period was entered upon when they were sold to the dealers, and this was the time of hardship, suffering and cruelty. Packed for departure loaded with chains, they started on the caravan journey across the desert—a journey marked at every stage by hunger, thirst, disease, and death. The stillness of the waste was only broken by cries for grain, piteous appeals for water, and wailings of despair. With burning fevers, parched throats, and sunken eyes they fell in hundreds by the way; and the only act of mercy shown

them by their owners was in the crack and flash of the pistol which put an end to their wretchedness. Such as survived this ordeal entered upon the third and final period, and this was one of comparative ease. They were retailed to private individuals and employed in domestic servitude, which in Egypt means neither hardship nor misery. Much that is fantastic and unreal has been written about slavery, and popular sympathy has often been enlisted in the service of a condition as often misunderstood. Domestic slavery in Egypt is as free from cruelty and unkindness as domestic service in England; indeed, in many cases the slaves have advantages beyond those of our servants. If a man, therefore, is too poor to provide for his own offspring, the condition of such offspring is improved by translation to a well-to-do neighbour, even under the bond of slavery; but the terms of bondage require careful supervision, and the translation should be immediate and personal. Gordon knew all this, and this was why he had determined to destroy the nest at Shaka, and wrung from Zebehr the fatal words:—"Put into effect the orders given under the tree."

A judicial review of what has now been written concerning Zebehr, slavery, and the Soudan, proves these three subjects to comprise all the essentials of

a most unholy Trinity in Unity. But it must be remembered that Zebehr is only dealt with as a princely representative of a class, and that there were with him in the interior some six thousand other slave-dealers and slave-hunters, each endowed with more or less power. That the end of a career so terrible and so destructive to humanity was a necessity, is perfectly true ; but Zebehr is naturally the last man to whom that necessity can be made clear. And herein lies an excuse for plots he has planned, and designs which have meant disloyalty. With him slave-hunting was justifiable, for it was a national institution : for years he had received the support of the Egyptian Government, who purchased his slaves, permitted him to import arms, to establish armies, and to fortify posts. It was only when he had reached a success—in his view well deserved, as representing the result of enterprise and energy—that the Government showed any disposition to fall out with him ; and it was but natural that, as a strong man, he should resent what he considered an ill-timed interference. His defeat of the Government troops under Bellali, whom he looked upon as Government spies, was condoned by the invitation to assist in the subjugation of Darfour. The motive of this invitation, however, was sufficiently patent to Zebehr and his chiefs, and the reward offered for their services was

held inadequate. Besides, the business was not untainted with Oriental cunning. In making Zebehr a Pasha, the Khedive was converting a semi-independent rival into an admitted vassal and servant of the State, so that there was some measure of reason in Zebehr's request for the Governor-Generalship. The bare Pashalik carried nothing with it; the position he demanded carried everything; and had it been granted, it is possible that Zebehr, the slave-hunter, might have become Zebehr, the great administrator and the friend of Egypt. It was refused, however, and when he went to Cairo, professedly on a visit of salutation to the Khedive, he was detained as a permanent prisoner, with no reasonable prospect of ever being allowed to return to his own country. In the whole action of the Egyptian Government there had been what he was bound to consider trickery and treachery; and it is no wonder that, under these circumstances, plot should have been met by counterplot. The result of a successful revolt in the Bahr-Gazelle would have led to his being sent into the Soudan to put matters right again, since it was in his absence that they had gone wrong. And in this reflection, which was followed by immediate action, lay the slave-king's great opportunity of returning to his own country. Had Gordon and Gessi been unable to

quell the revolt, Zebehr would undoubtedly have succeeded them. Indeed, Nubar Pasha actually wrote that, if Gordon approved, he was prepared to send him at once, and that the slave-hunter had promised to pay the State a revenue of £25,000 a year. This meant a complete reversal of Gordon's policy, for, clearly, the only way in which Zebehr could provide a revenue of £25,000 a year was by sending down slaves into Egypt. "Let slave-hunting receive its death-blow in the destruction of all slave strongholds, and then, if you will, let Zebehr be given a responsible position in a country where he is known and able to exercise his administrative powers, and let that responsible position be well paid and firmly supported:" this was the tenour of the policy which at that time Gordon recommended, and which, as everybody knows, he has since revealed to the world.





PORTRAIT OF THE MAHDI.

CHAPTER II.

PALESTINE, BELGIUM, AND CHABING CROSS.

“WE have nothing to do when the scroll of events is unrolled but to accept them as being for the best.” These words—Gordon’s own—may be taken as a fair text to the incidents which follow; while the part he played fitly illustrates how word and deed with him go hand-in-hand. In a paradise of peace and fancied obscurity in Palestine, he had dreamed, as I have said, of days he would devote to the London poor—of a renewal on a larger scale of the happy times at Gravesend. But the world which he so ardently hoped would forget him had not forgot. While he was mapping out a missionary life at Whitechapel or Bethnal Green, a king and his ministers were busy planning an enterprise which they intended he should lead.

The King of the Belgians some three years before had conferred with Gordon concerning a scheme for the administration of certain territory on the Congo, and so perpetuating in these latitudes the memory

of his dead son. The ex-Governor-General, fresh from the miseries of the Soudan, lent a willing ear to a cause which so nearly resembled the one he had reluctantly abandoned; and he agreed, should the assent of his Government and of the other Powers be secured, to give his services in its aid. When, therefore, three years later, there were letters from the King reminding him of his promise and asking him to take up the work now far enough advanced for his control, he at once put by his antiquarian studies, postponed his schemes for the London poor, and with characteristic promptitude left Jaffa by the first ship—a battered merchantman, which was nearly wrecked on the way. Once at Brussels, the final arrangements for the new undertaking were not long in being completed. The King, delighted to have secured so able and willing an envoy, lost not a moment in discussing his plans and in placing the fullest instructions in Gordon's hands. But the "scroll of events was as yet unrolled;" and the envoy had after all to accept another mission and other masters as being for the best.

When he took leave of the Soudan it had been unhesitatingly predicted that his good work would be rapidly undone: the slavers so effectually broken would regain their lost power; instead of order

there would be anarchy, instead of peace there would be war. Never was prediction more credible or more true. Before a year had passed the Soudanese were clamouring for his return; and in another, rebellion and slavery had re-posessed the land. The Egyptian Government, too much concerned with internal troubles, had, during the rising under Arabi, paid scarce any attention to the changed condition of the Soudan; they regarded the tumult as a mere outbreak of internecine warfare easily compassed and as easily quelled. But before the Arabi riots were put down or the ringleaders condemned, they began to perceive that they had blundered. They had to admit the existence of a Pretender, who, if not at once faced, might rapidly become more formidable than Arabi himself. This was Mahomed Achmet, better known as the Mahdi, a name given him by Raouf Pasha. Of his personality and the extent of his influence next to nothing at first was known; but it is clear, judging from the scattered accounts we have of him from those who have seen him, that he had studied the Prophet's part profoundly, and could put his studies to excellent purpose.

Colonel Stewart, when engaged in reporting on the Soudan for the English Government, collected information about the Mahdi's history, and discovered

that he was a Dongolawi, or native of Dongola. His grandfather was called Fahil, and lived on the island of Naft Arti, which lies east of and opposite to Ordi, the native name for the capital of Dongola. His father was Abdullahi, by trade a carpenter. In 1852 Abdallah left Naft Arti and went to Shendy, a town on the Nile south of Berber. At that time his family consisted of three sons and one daughter, whose names were Mahomed, Hamid, Mahomet Achmet (the Mahdi), and Nur-el-Sham (Light of Syria). At Shendy another son was born to him, and was called Abdullah.

One day Mahomed Achmet received a beating from his uncle, to whom he was apprenticed. Thereupon he ran away to Khartoum, and joined the free school or "Medressu" of a Faki who resided at Hoghali, a village east of and close to Khartoum. This school is attached to the tomb of Sheikh Hoghali, the patron saint of Khartoum, who is greatly revered by the inhabitants of that town and district. The Sheikh of the shrine, although he keeps a free school and feeds the poor, derives a handsome revenue from the gifts of the pious. He claims to be a descendant of the original Hoghali, and through him of Mahomet. Here Mahomed remained for some time studying religion, but making little progress in the profane accomplish-

ments of reading and writing. Presently he left Hoghali and went to Berber, where he joined another free school kept by one Sheikh Ghubush at a village of that name and attached to a greatly venerated shrine. Here in six months he completed his religious education. Thence he went to Aradup (tamarind tree) a village south of Kana. In 1870 he became a disciple of another Faki—Sheikh Nur-el-Daim (Continuous Light). Nur-el-Daim subsequently ordained him a Sheikh or Faki, and he then took up his abode in the island of Abba, near Kana, on the White Nile. Here he began by making a cave, into which it was his practice to retire and to repeat for hours one of the names of the Deity, the effect of which practice he greatly heightened by an accompaniment of fasting, incense-burning, and prayers. By degrees the fame of his sanctity spread far and wide; and he grew rich, collected disciples, and married several wives, all of whom he was careful to select from among the daughters of influential Sheikhs and other notables. To keep within the legalised number (four), he was in the habit of divorcing his surplus and re-espousing according to his fancy.

About the end of May, 1881, he began to write to his brother Fakis, and announce himself the Mahdi foretold by Mahomet. He had (it appeared)

a divine mission comprehending the reform of Islam and the establishment of a universal equality, a universal law, a universal religion, and a community of goods; and it also appeared that all who did not believe in him should be destroyed, were they Christian, Muslim, or Pagan. Among others, he wrote to Mahomet Saleh, a very learned and influential Faki of Dongola, directing him to collect his dervishes and friends, and to join him at Abba. Mahomed Saleh, however, informed the Government of his proceedings, and added on his own account that the poor man must be mad. This information, with more collected from other quarters, alarmed Raouf Pasha, and the result was the expedition of August 3, 1881.

In person the Mahdi is tall and slim, with a black beard and a light brown complexion. Like most Dongolawis, he reads and writes with difficulty. He is local head of the Gheelan or Kadrigé order of dervishes, a school founded by Abdul Kader-el-Ghulami, the saint whose tomb is at Bagdad.*

The Government's first step was to recall Abdul Kader, the general then in command. So far this officer's achievements had been poor enough: he had led an army against the rebels without effect, and had allowed the Mahdi to advance within easy

* See Appendix 1.

distance of Khartoum. Their next move was to appoint Alaidin Pasha in his place, with Colonel Hicks, a retired British officer who had done good service in India, as chief of the staff. The force consisted of eight English officers, six thousand infantry, one thousand irregulars, five hundred cavalry and a small force of artillery. After reconnoitering the district round Khartoum, Hicks and his little army, on April 9, gave battle to the rebels, five thousand strong, defeated them, and left five hundred, with their leader, one of the Mahdi's captains, dead on the field. The False Prophet at once entrenched himself at Obeid, gathered together all the tribes at his command, and patiently awaited the event of a more decisive encounter. Meantime the two commanders of the Egyptian force were working ill together; jealousy culminated in quarrel, and the result was that Alaiden Pasha was recalled, while Colonel Hicks was promoted to the Command-in-Chief of the army of the Soudan.

In September he moved to Duem, with the intention of advancing on Obeid. It was generally accounted a rash and ill-considered move, and one which, however daring in intention and fortunate in issue, was, under the circumstances, in the highest degree uncertain and improvident. Hicks knew next to nothing of the strength of the enemy, and

seemed unaware of the intense heat of the waterless desert into which he had elected to plunge. Even Lord Dufferin, who in many respects spoke favourably of the scheme, admitted that the means of transport were deficient, and the troops not of the best. This alarm was fully justified by the event; but the English Ministry raised no objection, and the expedition went on.

News came in of uprisings in the Eastern Soudan, and when it was ascertained that the Bedouins had overcome certain reinforcements sent into the district of Tokar, under the command of Mahmoud Pasha and Capt. Moncrieff, the public anxiety was greatly increased. It transpired that the square had been broken and cut to pieces, and the English Commander killed. The intention of the Government to reduce the British force in Egypt had hardly been made known to the world when fresh and terrible tidings arrived: Hicks' army, 11,000 strong, had been lured into an ambushade by the Mahdi and destroyed. According to a trustworthy chief in the Egyptian service, the expeditionary force was led, on Nov. 1, by a treacherous guide into a defile, where the rebels lay in ambush. For three days they made a desperate stand, but the superior numbers of the enemy, the scorching heat, and, above all, the terrible thirst they suffered, disor-

ganized them utterly. Out of the eleven thousand not eleven escaped to Egypt: they were massacred, or they surrendered themselves prisoners, or they joined the Mahdi. This statement, I may add, must be taken *cum grano salis*. It is difficult to believe, however numerous and however fierce the rebel army, that eleven thousand men were either killed or captured. Of trustworthy details concerning the three days' tragedy there are few or none; but it is estimated that the number of renegades—Egyptian “nondescripts,” as Gordon called them: ragamuffins in no way adverse to the False Prophet—must have been very large. All that is really known is that Hicks was trapped into a position in which he could not use his guns, that the square was broken, and that the army vanished. The English officers fought bravely and well, Hicks, according to later authority, receiving his death-wound from a lance on the third day, when he had burned his last cartridge.*

This disaster left only two Englishmen in the Soudan: Mr. Frank Power, correspondent of the *Times* at Khartoum, and Colonel Coëtlogon, who had stayed behind in that city. Its import was very great: it meant another and a greater army to the False Prophet, and a lost kingdom to the

*See Appendix 2.

Khedive. Governors hitherto loyal surrendered their provinces or towns; tribes hitherto friendly sent in their adherence to the Mahdi. The panic from the loyal centres worked its way into the councils of Ministers at Cairo; but it did not reach the bureaux of Downing Street. A general cry of "Clear out of the Soudan" went up from the ministerial camps, and in due time Sir Evelyn Baring was instructed to advise the Khedive to abandon that troublesome province, and establish a strengthened frontier at Souakim. Our interests in Egypt being thus threatened, the old orders to withdraw the army were countermanded; Rear-Admiral Sir W. Hewett, Commander-in-Chief in the Indian Ocean, was called upon to support Egyptian interests on the Red Sea; while the care of Egyptian interests on land was handed over to Baker Pasha, one of the ablest and most distinguished of living soldiers. Proceeding to Souakim with a native force, he took supreme military and civil command in the Soudan. His first operations were to consist of an attempt to break through a great army of rebels infesting the Red Sea littoral, and to rescue and withdraw the Egyptian garrisons in Sincat and Toker, both hard pressed by the enemy.

Such, together with the concentration of the

Egyptian troops already in the disaffected province, were the means taken to check, and, if possible, beat back the armies of rebellion, which, from their recent victories had gained a power and an authority that boded ill, not only to Khartoum, but to Cairo itself. By those best acquainted with the character of the enemy and the country he was contesting they were held to be wholly inadequate. Egyptian linesmen, it was pointed out, would prove valueless in an encounter with swarms of fanatics fighting for freedom and careless of death; it was felt that only English or Ottoman soldiers were equal to the situation. Yet the policy of abandonment prevailed. It was decided not to despatch British troops beyond the Egyptian border; and, if the Mahdi were veritably an envoy of the Prophet, how, it was asked, should the Caliph, the Commander of the Faithful, give countenance and aid to the suppression of a Holy War? That it was accepted as a Holy War by thousands is unquestionable; and that a belief in its leader as inspired of Heaven was general, and for the most part enthusiastic, is no less certain. The sudden growth of the Mahdi's power had shown the oppressed the way to liberty, and the whole country, ripe for rebellion, had risen at his call.

Gordon had foreseen the difficulty for years. "In

spite of the heavy blow that has been struck at revolt," he said, in 1877, "any great leader could still make himself master of the Soudan." It was not alone the slave-dealers who were to be feared, but the vast tribes, born to the arts of war, ever ready to act as allies, and holding in contempt the feeble and effeminate rule of the divan at Cairo. "Had it not been," he adds, "that Zebehr and his party were the most inveterate slave-hunters, and had committed the most fearful cruelties, it might have been better for the people of the Soudan had the revolt been successful. There is no doubt that, if the Governments of France and England do not pay more attention to the Soudan—if they do not establish at Khartoum a branch of the mixed tribunals and see that justice is done, the disruption of the Soudan from Cairo is only a question of time. This disruption, however, will not end the troubles, for the Soudanese, through their allies—the Black Soldiers, I mean—will carry on their efforts in Cairo itself. Now, these Black Soldiers are the only troops in the Egyptian service that are worth anything." These forecasts, as we have seen, were only too accurate. A leader—and a great one—arose; the disruption was complete; the line of communication was cut between Khartoum and Souakim. Can it now be doubted that the Mahdi,

the number of whose following was at one time estimated at three hundred thousand, availed himself of the aid of these very tribes, "who can put from two thousand to six thousand horse and camel men in the field?"

Meanwhile, there was absolute diversity of opinion, both in Downing Street and at Cairo, on the subject of offensive and defensive operations alike. An English Note to the Khedive insisted upon the abandonment of the Soudan and the withdrawal to Wady Halfa of the Egyptian garrisons, and was yet couched in such terms as seemed to deprive his administrators of the power to devise a line of action suited to the policy. They had been told to withdraw at an early date, and to surrender territory which belonged not to Egypt but to Turkey. When the Ministry under Cherif Pasha were called upon to consider this Note they replied by sending in their immediate resignations. The Queen's Government, they said, had commanded them to abandon the Soudan; this step they had no right to take, inasmuch as the Soudan was not their own, but a possession of the Ottoman Porte entrusted to their care. And Cherif Pasha said: "We have thousands of men in the Soudan, and nothing should ever induce me to allow them to be abandoned to the miseries of Mahdi rule."

I am sure I am right. Time and posterity will judge in this matter between Mr. Gladstone and me."

The Ministry which succeeded was at first averse from abandonment, and only in favour of withdrawal; so, at least, said Nubar Pasha, who formed the new cabinet and played in it the threefold part of President of the Council, Minister of Justice, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. On being told that the other Ministers seemed wisely chosen with reference to the present crisis, he said: "Yes; but just now the word 'Minister' in Egypt is derived from the Latin word *minus*, and Ministers here are equal to an algebraical *minus* sign, meaning something less than nothing." And so, indeed, it seemed. Nubar's assent to withdraw the garrisons contributed nothing to a solution of the problem how the withdrawal was to be effected; and every day bred new plans, each more impracticable than the others.

Between Dongola and Gondokoro there were 21,000 Egyptian troops, 81 guns, a whole population of civilians, with their wives and children, all loyal to the Government, and every day more seriously threatened by the rebel advance. Of the centres, peopled by these subjects, Khartoum was, of course the most important; and it will give some notion of

the uncertain mind of the Egyptian authorities when it is stated that at the very moment when every conceivable measure of evacuation was being proposed and discussed, a council was sitting—composed of Nubar Pasha, Sir Evelyn Baring, and Sir Evelyn Wood—for the devising of means for the retention of the Soudanese capital.

The cry for help that came from its 11,000 citizens, through Colonel Coëtlogan, had, doubtless, its effect. He had telegraphed from Khartoum as follows :—"I implore you, in view of the impossibility of relieving the garrison, to give orders for our retreat, as one third of the troops are disaffected, and cannot be depended upon, even for maintaining order in the town. The inhabitants and their neighbours are against them to a man. With twice their number we could not resist an attack. While regretting the necessity of advising his Highness to abandon territory, yet it is the only way of saving the army. Escape is now possible, but it will not be later." This was peremptory enough; and it was natural that Ministers should debate the project of keeping Khartoum for the Khedive, even though arrangements were on foot by which Abdel Kader Pasha, Minister of War, should proceed by the Nile route to superintend the evacuation. This was one of the many con-

traditions of the time. Like all the others, it contributed to the general anxiety, and materially strengthened the cause of those who cried out for annexation and the return of Ismail.

Such was the state of things when, early in January, Gordon came once more to England to see his friends. He had returned to find that, if in entering the service of King Leopold, he must quit that of the Queen; and this after a career of administration and of war unequalled in contemporary history. It is true that his work had been for the most part done under a foreign flag; but this seemed no reason why so eminent an officer should be summarily forced to retire from the shadow of his own. It was the story of the Active List over again. It did not prevent him from resigning his commission, but it did give rise to a controversy which brought his brilliant services again before the public. Indignation was general. The country awoke to the fact that in Gordon it had a far greater than Garibaldi, a hero of the noblest and rarest type. It could not look on with patience and see him expelled its service. It was quick to perceive that his advice should be sought as to the best means of solving the present problem. It was not less quick to feel that with such work in hand to be faced and done, he, and he only, was the man to face and do it.

The suggestion came first from Sir Samuel Baker. On Jan. 12 he had received a letter from Gordon, in which a hope was expressed that the author of "Ismailia" might himself be induced to undertake the duty which few were so well fitted to perform. The writer had jotted down a general view of the situation : of the Mahdi's prospects if he were left unmolested, and of the programme to be followed for the restoration of peace and order. "If the Sultan allows the Mahdi to be head of the Government," Gordon said, " he virtually abdicates all authority over the Hedjaz, Syria, Palestine ; therefore, if we prevent his action, or refuse propositions such as I have made, we virtually upset the Sultan in the countries I have named. I take it for granted, then, that you will go ; and I would recommend (1), permission to be got from the Sultan to engage 4,000 of his reserve troops, both officers and men, which will be under your brother's command, and be volunteers, with a promise of remuneration at end of their services ; (2), that some 2,000 Belooches, under the native officers, should be enlisted in India, who have been soldiers of her Majesty, old sturdy warriors ; for your cavalry, you can horse them in the Hedjaz, Palestine and Syria ; (3), that her Majesty's Government will allow you to purchase from her Majesty animals, paying a percentage

on all purchases ; (4), that her Majesty's Government should allow military store officers to aid you, but not to go into the field."

But it was reserved to an enterprising journal to give the world a yet more important exposition of Gordon's views, and to suggest a certain means by which he might be employed. The recluse had not long set foot in England when he received a telegram from the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, begging him to allow a reporter to visit him at Southampton and take note of his views on the situation. The reason given was that his expression of opinion would materially influence the prospects for good or evil of the heathens he had ruled. The request was refused on the ground that the worth of the opinion asked was overrated ; but the editor, thinking differently, hurried off to Southampton. The result was an interview, during which Gordon freely expressed his ideas : on the difficulties and dangers of evacuation, and of the cause of the revolt, its chances of increase, and the means for its suppression. He laid special stress on the fact that it would cost more to retain a hold on Egypt proper if the Eastern Soudan were abandoned to the Mahdi or the Turk, than to retain a hold upon the Soudan itself by the aid of material already on the ground. That Darfour and Kordofan must be abandoned he readily admitted ;

but, considering the influence a conquering Mahomedan power established close to the frontier would exercise upon the destinies of Egypt, he held that the provinces lying to the east of the White Nile and to the north of Sennaar should be retained. He pointed out that, if the whole of the Eastern Soudan were surrendered to the Mahdi, the Arab tribes on both sides of the Red Sea would take fire and rise ; and that the Turks, in self-defence, would have to face a formidable danger, inasmuch as it was quite possible that the whole Eastern Question might be reopened by the Mahdi. At the same time, he in no way accepted the False Prophet as a religious leader, but as a personification of popular discontent, engendered by a renewal of government under Turkish oppressors. The man, he said, was apparently a mere puppet put forward by Zebehr's father-in-law, the largest slave-owner in Obeid, and had assumed a religious title to give colour to his defence of the popular rights. Returning to the subject of evacuation, Gordon put the pertinent question : " What is going to be done with the garrisons in Khartoum, Darfour, Bahr-Gazelle, and Gondokoro, whose only offence is their loyalty to their sovereign ? As the army could not go to their relief, there was no remaining there with their lives ; so that there were but two courses left :

either absolute surrender to the Mahdi, or the defence, at all hazards, of Khartoum. The latter, in Gordon's opinion, was the only one to be followed. "There is no difficulty about it," he said. "The Mahdi's forces will fall to pieces of themselves; but if, in a moment of panic, orders are issued for the abandonment of the whole of the Eastern Soudan, a blow will be struck against the security of Egypt and the peace of the East, which may have fatal consequences."

He considered that the Eastern Soudan might be saved if a firm grip was taken of the helm in Egypt. The first step, and the best was to set up Nubar Pasha, and to leave his hand free; he was the ablest of Egyptian Ministers, proof against foreign intrigue, and a perfect master of the situation. His policy could only be conjectured, but it was probable that he would appoint a Governor-General at Khartoum, and give him two millions sterling—a large sum, but one "which had much better be spent now than wasted in a vain attempt to avert the consequences of an ill-timed surrender. Sir Samuel Baker, who possesses the essential energy requisite to the office, might be appointed Governor-General of the Soudan; and he might take his brother as Commander-in-Chief." But before such a plan was

set in operation, it should be made clear to the Soudanese that a permanent constitution was granted them—by which no Turk nor Circassian would ever be allowed to enter the provinces, to plunder the inhabitants in order to fill their own pockets—and that no immediate emancipation of slaves should be attempted. With regard to Darfour, Nubar would probably restore the family and the heir of the late Sultan; the new ruler, if he were subsidised by the Government, and sent back with Sir Samuel Baker, would not have much difficulty in regaining possession of the kingdom, which had once been one of the best governed in Africa.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* accompanied the publication of these views with a strong recommendation that Gordon himself should be allowed to solve the difficulties with which the Gladstone Ministry had contrived to beset themselves.* This was the expression of a national desire. There were rumours, from Berlin and elsewhere, that the Government were reconsidering their policy with the view to employing him; but they made no sign, though the War Office went so far as to retain his name on the Active List. But this was not enough, and there was universal discontent that the aid of one who knew the Soudan better than any living

* See Appendix 3.

European should not have been immediately invited. The King of the Belgians was no bar to such a scheme, for it was felt that much as he desired to carry out his long-projected expedition to the Congo he would freely release Gordon from his promise in face of such an emergency. Meantime, Baker Pasha declared the relief of Sincat impossible; and with fresh disaster on every hand, the sense of anxiety as to what would happen next grew more intense with every day.

But though rumour was busy, no word came from the Government, and Gordon left London for the Congo on January 16, 1884, *via* Belgium, to bid the King good-bye. He had not been twelve hours in Brussels when he was recalled by the Ministry. The measure had been kept so profound a secret that when on the 18th he returned to London none but the Cabinet were aware of the fact, and it was only after a prolonged interview with its members that his own relations had an opportunity of seeing him. This was only for a few minutes, for on being asked at Downing Street whether he was willing to undertake a mission to Khartoum, he had expressed his readiness to go by that night's mail. So hurried was his departure, that much of his baggage had to be sent after him. On leaving for Brussels two days before he had taken an early train, and thus

avoided the ceremony of leave-taking on the railway platform—a ceremony he much dislikes. On leaving for the Soudan, he was met at Charing Cross by the Duke of Cambridge, who has known him from a boy ; Lord Wolseley, his comrade of the Crimea ; Colonel Brocklehurst ; and Mr. Robert Gordon, his nephew, and Lord Hartington's secretary. The train was delayed a quarter of an hour to allow of a last word on the subject of his mission ; and then, amidst a hearty God-speed, the new Commissioner started for Khartoum, in company with Colonel Stewart, whom he had chosen for his military secretary.

CHAPTER III.

PEACE AND WAR.

THE policy of the Government up to this point had been regarded as so pernicious in its effects that the public refused, until more was known, to take any other view than that the sudden choice of so able a representative meant either a change in tactics or a desperate effort to obtain shelter from universal censure. The story of Gordon's resignation, his reinstatement on the Active List, his departure for the Congo, his return to London, and his start for the Soudan, seemed so ludicrous to those not behind the scenes that most of us were ready to consider the appointment as the last card in a monstrous game of vacillation. So infatuated were the public with this idea, they believed that no action would have been taken but for their clamour, and that, even as it was, the Ministry were greatly to blame for not sooner asking and taking Gordon's advice.

Now the facts were these. The English Govern-

ment had acted with unnatural promptitude, and the Egyptian Government with all its habitual dilatoriness. Lord Granville, through Sir Evelyn Baring, had more than once put the question to Cairo whether a British officer would be of use, and had as often received for answer that he would not. More than this, a month before the appointment he had suggested Gordon himself; but the suggestion likewise was evaded. The Cairo Pashas as is their wont, had taken their own time to consider the measures necessary to meet the crisis, and it was not far short of six weeks after the first offer from Downing Street that they disclosed their views. The intimation came through the British Agent at Cairo, and it was to the effect that the services of a capable officer might be used after all. The telegram in which this surrender was conveyed was followed on the same day by one more private, and sent as a rider to the first, in which Sir Evelyn Baring gave it as his own opinion that Gordon was the right man.

Nor was the action of the Ministry less consistent towards Gordon in the matter of the Congo than it was in the affair of the Soudan. Foreseeing that their suggestion for his employment might ultimately be reconsidered by the Khedive, they had retained him in the Queen's service, and were prepared, should

he not have already left Europe, to use him at Khartoum. The proof of this is that as soon as they were in a position to carry out this plan, they lost not an hour in placing him in charge of English honour and the destinies of the Soudan.

News soon came of Gordon's arrival in Egypt. He had announced it as his intention not to travel by way of Cairo, but to proceed *viâ* Souakim direct to Khartoum : his view being that it was better to go into the disaffected provinces as a peace-maker from England than as a ruler from Cairo, especially as a visit to that city would, in all probability, result in a firman of instruction from the Khedive. Through representations made to him, however, by Sir Evelyn Baring, on the importance of a few days' sojourn in the capital, and, what was still more authoritative, by reason of the fact that the Berber-Souakim route was blocked by the rebels, he abandoned his first plan. He was met at Port Said on Jan. 24 by Sir Evelyn Wood. The two generals had not seen each other since the days when they were subalterns in the Crimea ; but their mutual recognition was immediate. In the few hours they passed together, these two soldiers, whose careers have so much in common, soon filled up that gap of thirty years, and became the warmest friends. Sir Evelyn said afterwards that Gordon's only fault was that

he was too good for his time, and should have lived centuries ago. He compared him to Bayard.

The enthusiasm at the Government's choice was perhaps even greater in Egypt than it had been in Europe, and this because its bearings were better and more fully understood. All classes on his landing were filled with confidence. The memory of the great work he had already achieved was revived. Many an Arab who had served under him told with bated breath the story of the Pasha's rule. "The Mahdi's hordes will melt away like dew," they said, "and the Pretender will be left like a small man standing alone, until he is forced to flee back to his island of Abbas." And these instances of faith were not confined to the populace. The Egyptian Ministry and the Khedive himself were equally reassured. The sole question which troubled the minds of those who could estimate the difficulties of the enterprise was whether, through delays incurred, he would not come upon the scene too late to effect his object. The two days spent in Cairo were, for the most part, devoted to conferences with Sir Evelyn Baring, the Egyptian Ministers, and the Khedive, who at once appointed him Governor-General of the Soudan. Sir Evelyn had urged the visit to Cairo in order to secure facilities which could not be ob-

tained without an understanding with the Egyptian Government. The result was a commission from the Khedive, fully endorsed by the English Government, and which, together with the nature of Gordon's mission, it is important to elucidate and disclose.

It was distinctly understood, then, between Gordon and the English Government, that the object of his mission was to report on the military situation in the Soudan, and on the measures it might be deemed advisable to take for the security of the loyal garrisons, and the safety of the Europeans in Khartoum. He was further desired to consider and report upon the best mode of effecting the evacuation of the Soudan, to devise a scheme by which the safety and the good administration, by the Egyptian Government, of the ports on the sea coast could best be secured, and to give special attention to the question of counteracting the stimulus which might possibly be given to the slave trade by the insurrection and by the withdrawal of Egyptian authority.

On these instructions, Gordon, while on board the *Tanjore*, between Brindisi and Port Said, wrote a memorandum, in the course of which he confirmed his past understanding with the Cabinet and sketched a programme for the future. He laid it down as fully

agreed between the Government and himself that they would not undertake to secure to the peoples of the Soudan a just future government, but that they did undertake to restore their independence, and to prevent the Egyptian Government from interfering with their affairs; and, further, that the object of his mission was to arrange for the evacuation—the manner to depend on circumstances—and the safe removal of Egyptian employés and troops. This, then, being what he was expected to do, he went on to suggest how it could best be done. He began by resolving that the country and its arsenals should be handed over to the heirs of the petty Sultans existing at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, the princes being left to recognise the Mahdi's rule or not as they pleased. To provide against a certain contingency: namely, that the Mahdi's force might attack the evacuating columns: he took it for granted that not only resistance, but even retaliation would be allowed, provided always that such action insured the future safety of his march. It was his fixed intention to fulfil his mission as a peace-maker as far as he might; at the same time he looked to the Government for support and consideration should the condition of affairs compel him to the use of arms. Such, in brief, was the

tenor of this memorandum. To it Colonel Stewart added a statement of his views, which accorded, for the most part, with those of his chief.*

Meantime a very striking scene had been enacted at the British Agency at Cairo. Among the witnesses were Nubar Pasha, Sir Evelyn Wood, Giegler Pasha, Colonel Stewart, and Colonel Watson. But the personages of the drama were Zebehr—the Black Pasha—Sir Evelyn Baring, and Gordon himself. He had intimated to Sir Evelyn Baring his desire to meet the ex-slaver in the presence of others, and the British Agent had accordingly arranged the interview. Aware of the deep-rooted hatred entertained by Zebehr for the man who had signed his son's death warrant, Sir Evelyn Baring took occasion, prior to the meeting, to discuss the manner in which the Black Pasha should be treated; for he saw danger in reviving the enmity of one whose influence was so great in the province to which Gordon was going. The precaution was scarcely necessary. Not only did Gordon entertain a high opinion of Zebehr's energy and talent; he even believed that events might take such a shape as to make his re-instatement desirable.

An eye-witness of the scene was much impressed by the contrast presented by the two Pashas: the

* See Appendix 4.

one with his black, shining skin, his scowling face, his picturesque appearance: the other with his fair complexion, his honest blue eyes, and simple dress. Their conversation is best given word for word. After the usual salutations, Gordon desired Zebehr to make any complaints against him which he might wish to make, and added that his statements would be written down.

ZEBEHR PASHA.—“I want to know why my property in the Soudan was confiscated?”

GORDON.—“Because you wrote a letter to your son, Suleiman, inciting him to revolt.”

ZEBEHR.—“Produce the letter, and then I will speak.”

GORDON.—“It was produced at the court-martial. The Khedive has the letter.”

ZEBEHR.—“When you went as Governor-General to the Soudan, I solemnly intrusted my son, Suleiman, to you, and told you he was thenceforth your son. He was only 16 years of age.”

GORDON.—“The question at present is about the letter. Do you deny its existence?”

ZEBEHR.—“I wrote to my son, but in the letter I did not incite him to rebel.”

GORDON.—“Well, I say that you did incite him.”

ZEBEHR.—“Then, if such a letter exists, what you did was right. Produce the letter.”

GORDON.—“The court-martial condemned Suleiman to death; they had your letter before them.”

ZEBEHR.—“Who was the President of that Court?”

GORDON.—“Hasan Pasha Hilmi.”

ZEBEHR.—“And who was over him?”

GORDON.—“I was.”

ZEBEHR.—“Produce the letter. Where is it? If such a letter existed, I ought to have been myself brought before a court-martial, and also condemned to death.”

GORDON.—“That letter was given to the present Khedive, and was kept with the proceedings of the Court.”

ZEBEHR.—“You are the subject of a great and just nation; there is no nation greater than England. I intrusted my son to you. Why did you not write and tell me, at the time, of the letter?”

GORDON.—“We do not write to tell a man of his sin when we have his letter before us. As for the letter, you had better ask the Khedive.”

ZEBEHR.—“For your own honour you ought not to have given up the letter, but kept it privately yourself.”

GORDON.—“But I gave it to the proper Court.”

ZEBEHR.—“Your name is known everywhere.

You have been writing against me in the papers and in your books. Produce the letter."

GORDON.—"Ask the Khedive, your master, for it. I had fifty copies of the trial printed, giving the whole history, and containing that letter."

ZEBEHR.—"Why did you print it?"

GORDON.—"Because I wanted to show the peoples of Soudan that I was fighting, not about the Slave Trade, but against rebels, and to settle who was to govern the Soudan."

ZEBEHR.—"My son met you at Dara with 4,000 men, and you refused his help."

GORDON.—"That is not the question."

ZEBEHR.—"But my property was seized eight months before you found that letter."

GORDON.—"Yes, but even before I found that letter, I had had enough evidence to prove that you had been inciting your son to rebel."

ZEBEHR.—"Produce that letter!"

GORDON.—"Well, there! That ends that business. Zebehr says that if the letter is found I am justified."

ZEBEHR.—"My son sent you nine emissaries from Dara; you shot them. He sent two more, and you shot them also."

GORDON.—"Then you have finished with the question of the letter. Now I will ask you if your son

Suleiman did not kill the whole of the black garrison in the Bahr-Gazelle?"

ZEBEHR.—"My son came to you at Dara, and offered you 4,000 men. He . . ."

GORDON.—"That does not matter. Answer my question. During my absence from the Soudan, while I was at Aden, never mind where, did not your son Suleiman kill 200 black troops?"

ZEBEHR.—"When you were Governor-General I told my son to obey you . . ."

GORDON.—"Did your son kill those 200 Egyptian soldiers?"

ZEBEHR.—"My son offered these troops, 4,000 men, to you, and you refused, and you dismissed . . ."

GORDON.—"Did your son kill those 200 men? That is the point."

ZEBEHR.—"It was not my fault. You recommended my son to the Khedive, who made him a Colonel, and after that . . ."

GORDON.—"Answer my question."

[Nubar Pasha repeats question to Zebehr.]

NUBAR PASHA.—"Zebehr says that his son was no longer under his influence, but under the orders of Gordon Pasha. While under his father, Suleiman did no such things, but while under Gordon Pasha he could not answer for him."

GORDON.—“I want an answer to my question.”
[Repeated.]

ZEBEHR.—“You recommended my son . . .”

NUBAR.—“Zebehr says he was not responsible for Suleiman, as the latter was then a Colonel under Gordon Pasha.”

GORDON.—“Then I understand, Zebehr Pasha, that you do not deny that your son rebelled, or that, if he rebelled, he was liable to be put to death. I say your son did kill these 200 black troops in the Bahr-Gazelle.”

ZEBEHR.—“But what about my property having been confiscated?”

GORDON.—“I told you before, that the letter is my justification for the confiscation. That ends the first question. If the letter is found, it will show that not only was all your property liable to be confiscated, but that you, too, were in danger of being put to death. On the other hand, if the Government will allow me, I say that if the letter does not exist, and if your property has been unjustifiably confiscated, I shall then recommend the Egyptian Government to compensate you for your loss. I shall be the first to see that reparation is done to you.”

ZEBEHR.—“I did not come to Cairo for money, but to see what was the will of the Government, and to enlist men. As to my son . . .”

GORDON.—“That is unnecessary. I treated your son with every consideration. I was not unkind to him; I did my best for him.”

ZEBEHR.—“But you killed my son whom I intrusted to you. He was as your own son.”

GORDON.—“Well, well, I killed my own son. There is an end of it.”

ZEBEHR.—“And then you brought my wives and women and children in chains to Khartoum, a thing which, for my name in the Soudan, was most degrading.”

GORDON.—“I differ from you. They were not in chains. I gave them every facility in the matter. But there! there is no use in Zebehr Pasha continually saying one thing and I another.”

ZEBEHR.—“The greatness, the justice of England is known throughout the Soudan, but you did not treat me justly.”

SIR E. BARING.—“General Gordon, have you any other questions to ask him except on these two points?”

GORDON.—“No.”

SIR E. BARING.—“Then I wish to explain to Zebehr Pasha that I called this meeting at my house at General Gordon's request; that General Gordon had heard that Zebehr had certain complaints to make against him; and that although it

was not particularly my business to hear these complaints, at the same time, as General Gordon wished it, I was quite willing to be present at the discussion between General Gordon and Zebehr Pasha."

[Zebehr here rose and kissed Sir E. Baring's hand.]

"At present, the conversation, which has been rather desultory, has ranged over two points. The first point was whether Zebehr's property was justly or unjustly taken away from him. In respect to this point, if I understand rightly, the whole difference of opinion between General Gordon and Zebehr lies as to the existence of a certain letter which, General Gordon alleges, was a letter from Zebehr to his son Suleiman inciting him to rebellion. Is that correct, General Gordon?"

GORDON.—"Quite correct."

SIR E. BARING.—"Zebehr denies the existence of that letter. General Gordon says that if that letter does not exist, and if, in fact, Zebehr Pasha was condemned upon evidence which, in default of the letter, would not have been conclusive, that he then thinks Zebehr should be compensated for his losses. . . ."

ZEBEHR.—"Compensation cannot be given to me for the honour of my wife and family; that is lost for ever."

SIR E. BARING.—"Zebehr recognizes, on the

other hand, that, if that letter does exist, then that all that was done to him was justly done."

ZEBEHR.—"If that can be proved, that I incited my son to rebellion in the letter, I do not want to live; put me to death with the sword."

SIR E. BARING.—"General Gordon, to whom did you give that letter?"

GORDON.—"To the present Khedive and to the court-martial."

SIR E. BARING.—"Then it must be in the Government archives."

GORDON.—"Yes; but, happily for me, I had it printed—in fact, fifty copies—and there is a copy at Khartoum."

SIR E. BARING.—"But the original would be annexed to the proceedings of the Court. All we can do is to have a search made for it. Sir Evelyn Wood, will you see to that?"

SIR E. WOOD.—"Yes; and failing that, shall I get certificates from the people still alive who saw the letter?"

[A short discussion ensued, and it was decided, first, to try and find the letter, and then to consider what would have to be done.]

GORDON.—"It will, of course, be fully understood that the mere fact of the letter not being found in the archives will not satisfy me that it never existed."

SIR E. BARING.—“Of course, I fully understand that. The second point refers to Zebehr’s son. General Gordon put to Zebehr a very direct question, namely, whether his son had been a party to the killing of 200 black Egyptian troops in the Bahr-Gazelle. Zebehr’s answer is that whatever his son may have done, he, Zebehr, is not responsible for his actions; but he does not, as I understand it, specifically deny what General Gordon alleges—that his son killed these 200 men. Is that correct, Zebehr?”

ZEBEHR.—“I do not by any means deny it. I deny my responsibility for my son’s conduct.”

SIR E. BARING.—“Then Zebehr does not deny the action of his son, but only his own responsibility for his son’s action. I do not think that we need discuss these two points any further.”

A more truly Oriental method of defence than Zebehr’s could hardly be found. Admission of the letter’s existence was the one thing he eluded. Why this was so will presently be explained. That Gordon was unable to produce a copy was due to the simple fact that he was not in the habit of travelling with all his papers about him.

Before Gordon took leave of Cairo, his suggestion that a Sultan of Darfour should be created as a check to the Mahdi’s rule, had been acted upon by

the Khedive; and Ameer Abdel Shakoor, the heir, was summoned to the Ghiezeh palace and there, on condition that freedom of commerce was maintained, and the slave-trade suppressed within his borders, he received back the province which had been wrested from his father. This settled, he accompanied Gordon to the Soudan. They quitted the capital on Jan. 26th, and went by rail as far as Assouan. There the General embarked for Wady Halfa, from which point he purposed to cross the desert for Abu Hamed, and thence to follow the Nile as far as Khartoum.

In every quarter, both at home and abroad, considerable doubt was felt as to whether he would ever reach the garrison, and doubt as to his means was soon intensified by anxiety as to his position. On Feb. the 4th, Baker Pasha, with three thousand five hundred Egyptians and a number of English officers, was totally defeated in an attempt to rescue the garrisons of Tokar and Sincat. The Egyptian soldiery, which he had been at some pains to drill as well as Zebehr's black slaves, turned out a complete and despicable failure. Panic-stricken at the fierce onset of the enemy, led by Osman Digna, one of the Mahdi's lieutenants, they made no effort to keep the square: some fired in the air; others crouched for mercy, and were speared; the rest flung down their arms and fled. In the rout many

English officers were killed, and the guns and ammunition captured. General Baker, in trying to rally the runaway herd, had a narrow escape, and was finally obliged to return to Souakim by transport. The quality of his material this one fact will be enough to show: out of the three thousand five hundred he had led to the relief, some ninety-six officers and two thousand two hundred men were killed.

The effects of this disaster were most serious. Osman Digna, flushed with triumph, and possessed of some three thousand rifles and their ammunition, was not slow to follow up his victory. His emissaries were soon scouring the country, rallying the tribesmen to the Mahdi; the wires between Massawa and Kassala, and between Berber and Khartoum were cut; and a forward movement on Souakim was daily expected. Meanwhile the condition of that port was bad enough to be almost hopeless. The flying Egyptians started a rumour that the defeat was a planned affair between Osman and the English officers, who had led them and their comrades to slaughter. The effect was sufficiently disturbing: some of the townsfolk showed signs of discontent, others declared for the Mahdi, and the streets were crowded with scowling men and women wailing their dead.

At home there were not a few who firmly

believed that England was to blame, though not in the sense reported by the heroes of Tokar. As for the foreign press, it exhausted its vocabulary of abuse in strictures on the Ministry. But all this was because no one would take the pains to realize what the Ministry had undertaken to do and what they had not. What they had agreed upon was the defence of the Red Sea littoral; and on this, through Admiral Hewett, they were at work, in what they considered the best way. The presence of English officers in the Tokar affair misled the public and the press; the fact being overlooked that these gentlemen did not represent their own country, but Egypt, in whose service they fought. But it was Gordon's chance of reaching Khartoum that caused the greater part of the concern. That he would be waylaid and murdered was held for certain; and the wildest rumours were afloat of the dangers he must encounter, and of the dangers he had already overcome. The alarm was increased by the publication of certain facts which were turned to sensational account by a section of the Press. The young Sultan of Darfour, it appeared, had proved a troublesome drunkard; and it was told that Gordon had taken with his baggage no less a sum than forty thousand pounds.* To the heated

* In reality he took but £2,000 with him beyond Assuan.

imagination of the public these circumstances became of appalling significance. Scenes in which the Envoy was the victim not only of rebel tribesmen, but of traitors in his own suite, were readily conjured up. When, therefore, his capture by the Arabs was reported, there were plenty of prophets ready to declare him dead. The news of the fall of Sincat, and of the slaughter of Tewfik's garrison, in an attempt to cut through the beleaguering rebels, completed the excitement. A wave of indignation at the desertion of these loyal and gallant men swept over Europe, and from all classes and from all communities there went up a cry of shame.

When the news arrived, the Parliamentary session was not a week old. The leaders of the Opposition moved a vote of censure in both Houses for their vacillating and inconsistent policy in the Soudan. Lord Salisbury, with the Peers of his party, carried the resolution by a majority of 100; while, in the Lower House, Sir Stafford Northcote, after a stormy sitting, was defeated by the Government, though there were signs of defection among their supporters. The reason given by the Government for not sending relief to the garrison at Sincat was, that such action might endanger the safety of those others which Gordon had gone out to rescue. But though this was stated in debate, it was instantly

belied by circumstances. Scarcely was the debate over than steps were taken for the immediate relief of Tokar, as hard pressed as Sincat had been, and of as much, and no more importance. To General Graham, then stationed at Cairo, was entrusted the task of its relief; but before his force of four thousand had landed at Trinkitat, the greater part of the garrison had surrendered and gone over to the rebels. The fall of Kassala, moreover, was every moment expected, and the district round about Massawa was threatened with general insurrection: so that nothing was left but to engage the enemy and hurl him back from Souakim.

The Arab leader was that Osman Digna who had beaten Baker. With nothing imposing in his presence, he is a curious mixture of merchant, politician, and fanatic. Some six years before he had suffered heavy losses as a slave-dealer, through two of his cargoes being captured by a British cruiser on the voyage to Jeddah. In the course of his marketings in Obeid he had met the Mahdi, who, discerning his ability, and aware of his wide connections in the Eastern Soudan, chose him for one of his lieutenants. In this as events had proved the impostor had shown his judgment. But circumstances had changed; and now, instead of meeting a pack of worthless Egyptians, Osman

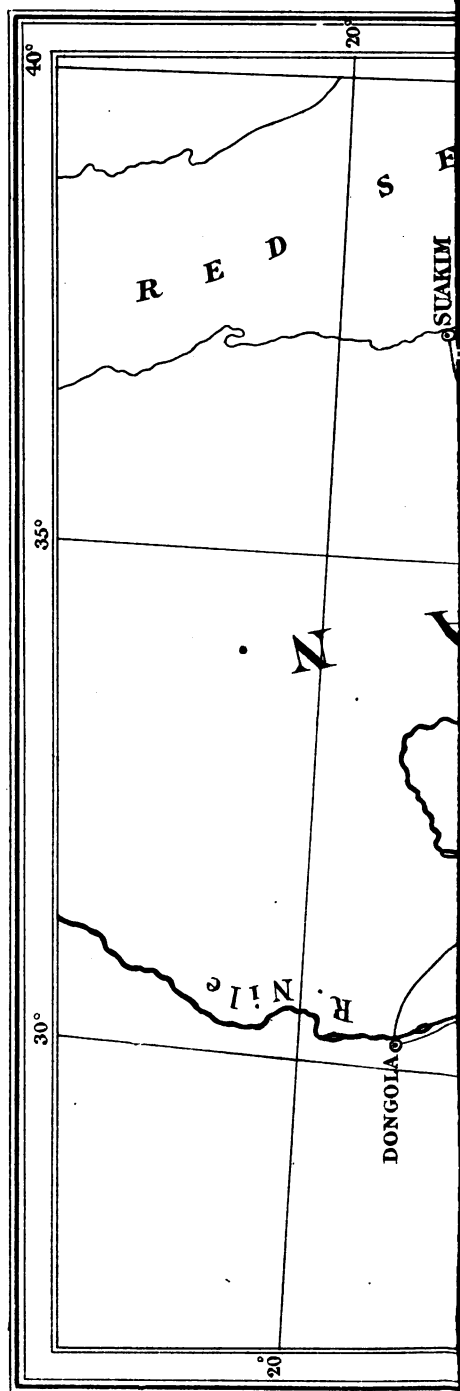
had to face a disciplined English force. In a desperate fight at Teb, on February 29, he was worsted, and driven back into the interior with great loss. But he was not subdued. Proclaiming a Holy War, he rallied the tribesmen to his standard, entrenched himself at Tamanieb, and in a very few days was ready for action once more. Hereupon the English Generals and Admirals at Souakim issued a proclamation to the disaffected, recommending those who had grievances to send delegates to Khartoum to meet Gordon, who was known to be a good and just man; and warning them that if they did not disperse and return to their homes the English army would forthwith march on their camp, and treat its occupants as rebels. Osman countered with a manifesto, calling upon God to witness that He had sent the Mahdi to take away their property, and exhorting them to choose between Mahomedanism and the sword. General Graham at once marched his force upon Osman's camp. A battle was fought at Tamari on March 13; and, supported by Admiral Hewett, General Graham completely routed the enemy, and put him to flight. These victories were regarded as a death-blow to the Mahdi in the Eastern Soudan. But on the other hand it was deemed highly important not to withdraw the conquering force, as



such a step would inevitably cause a repetition of the old troubles.

And, meanwhile, where was Gordon? While politicians were wrangling over the terms of his mission, while the churches and chapels of every sect were offering up prayers for his safety, he was speeding through the desert. Telegram after telegram warned him of danger, but he took no notice, and his news of himself was as meagre as his own faith in his safety was complete. To a troublesome chief on the way he said: "Meet me at Khartoum. If you want peace, I am for peace; if you want war, I am ready." To the terror-stricken garrison of Khartoum he telegraphed: "You are men, not women. Be not afraid; I am coming."



GENERAL GORDON'S MAP
SHOWING THE SITUATION OF THE REBELLION
— IN THE —
S O U D A N,
early in 1884.



-  *B. Raiding tribes hemming in Sennar Garrison.*
 *C. The Rebellion of Hadendowa.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE ENVOY OF PEACE.

GORDON reached Assouan on January 30th, and soon had the situation at his fingers' ends. The Mahdi, it seemed, had with him still the deserters from Hicks' army; together with some half-dozen Arab tribes who could put from six to eight thousand horsemen in the field, and several influential Chiefs all deeply interested in the Slave Trade. But the tribes, who were Kordofanese, were averse from quitting their homes, and Khartoum, the Equatorial Provinces, and the Bahr-Gazelle were really in much less danger than had at first appeared. Gordon at once addressed a letter to the Mahdi, bidding him at once send down the Europeans at Obeid to Khartoum.

The revolt between Khartoum and Sennaar was clearly the work of the Mahdi's agents. The revolt of the Hadendoa tribe, however, was due to a very different cause. When the Egyptian troops

were dispatched from Souakim to Berber, two Egyptian officials—Reschid Pasha and Ibrahim Bey—agreed to pay the Handendoas seven dollars per transport camel for the march. Instead, they only gave them one dollar per camel, no doubt considering the other six their own. By this villanous breach of contract the Handendoas, who actually conveyed no less than ten thousand troops across the desert, were put to heavy losses. They were not slow to take the field, and their defection was the real cause of Baker's defeat. Osman, who had played but a small part until they joined him, suddenly became a power; and the history of their grievance is enough to account for the merciless onslaught.

Examples of Egyptian misrule were visible on every hand. The employées of the Soudan railway at Assouan were three months in arrears of pay. They were not merely upholding Mahomet and his Prophet: they were avenging their live stock; and Gordon immediately telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring to send them their money. At Korosko, where he arrived on February 2nd, they told him the Sub-Governor and General of Brigade at Khar-toum, through idleness and negligence, had allowed the revolt between that town and Sennaar to gain ground until communication was impossible. Gordon

received these last tidings in silence; but he resolved within himself that, once at his journey's end, the cause of such a state of things should instantly be removed. Meantime, he appointed Colonel Stewart Sub-Governor-General of the Soudan, and expressed his confidence in Ibrahim Bey, whose abilities he knew, by making him Director of War and Marine. Having sent down the women and children, he telegraphed to Nubar Pasha for a kind-hearted man to meet them. This done, he plunged into the wilderness, and was lost to the world.

Every moment was precious, and between him and Abu Hamed there were two hundred and fifty miles of desert. Of his many rides, this was the most urgent and desperate, and once on his camel's back, he sped through the dreary gorges of the At Moor at his old unrivalled pace: past the sandstrewn rocks that glitter in the sun, past doom-palm and mimosa, past the solitary encampments of the fierce Ababdehs, past carcases of man and beast that lay dry and scorching on the track; till, in a space of time, incredibly brief, he emerged at Abu Hamed. There, from all parts, were messengers to welcome him as Governor-General. From this terminus of the desert he wrote an important memorandum, suggesting that Her Majesty's Government

should retain the suzerainty of Soudan ; * and then he took boat for Berber, before whose white houses, mud huts and lively gardens he arrived on February 11th.

He was received with enthusiasm, and the town was illuminated during his stay. The English Government had requested him, on public grounds, to run no risks. In reply he was able to say that, with all the chief men to support him, he had no forebodings. His main desire, and this he put into effect at once, was to impress upon the people that his advent among them was the end of all corruption and tyranny. He told them the Soudan would soon be their own to govern for themselves; that their old privileges would be renewed; and that it would be his care to show them the way to peace and prosperity. That he was believed was shown by no less than four hundred candidates coming forward for appointments. And the people soon saw that it was true; for on the same day they were given to know that all arrears to their old masters for the last year, and one half of those due to their new one for the next, had been struck off the books. To fitly carry out these and other reforms in his absence, and to provide for the defence of the district, he created a Council of twelve

* See Appendix 4 A.

Notables, and placed over them, as President and Governor of the Province, Hussein Pasha Khalifa, a man whom he had reason to esteem. These measures were embodied in a Proclamation,* which was posted all over the town; and when Gordon took leave of Berber on February 14th, he was in a position to telegraph to the Ministry that they need have no anxiety, for the people, great and small, were heartily glad to be free of a union which had only wrought them sorrow. In three days, then, as far as Berber was concerned, the recognition of his assumption of supreme power was complete.

But his desire that no concern should be felt for his safety, if understood by the Government, was unheeded by the public. Some held the route from Berber to Khartoum more dangerous than the desert itself; and letters to the papers described the treacherous tribes that, ambushed in the long grass upon the river's bank, would be waiting to hurl their spears upon the Envoy. How different was the real picture! The people flocked to the river's edge to acclaim him their deliverer; he went among them, and conferred with their chiefs; to some he gave, and others whom he could turn to account he took with him on his way. At Shendy—the junction of the great caravan roads between

* See Appendix, 5.

Darfour, Sennaar and Suakim—the enthusiasm was magnificent as it had been elsewhere; the people crowded to bless him as the bearer of justice and of peace. His thoughts at this moment must have reverted to the story of Ismail Pasha, son of Mehemet Ali, who, at this very place, met with a reception, the memory of which has never been effaced. He had arrived from Cairo, not to help the inhabitants, but to exact certain dues from their chief, the Tiger of Shendy. Ismail, while ordering him to bring fodder for the troops, struck him with his pipe upon the head, thus inflicting the greatest insult an Egyptian can confer. The Tiger received the blow with a series of salaams; and before night-fall Ismail and his men were supplied with stacks of dried grass, ranged by order of the chief in a ring around the camp. But before morning they awoke to find themselves encircled by tongues of flame and clouds of smoke, and faced by the Tiger and his followers, who, with poised lances, bade them choose between two deaths.

A Proclamation from Gordon, addressed to the people of Khartoum, preceded his arrival. He told them that, knowing of the general regret caused by the severe measures of the Government for the suppression of the slave traffic, and the seizure and punishment of all concerned, according

to convention and decree, he had resolved that none should interfere with their property, and that henceforth whoever had slaves should enjoy full right to their service, and full control over them. When the terms of this document reached Europe, a storm of indignation was raised against both the law and the giver. Its terms were greeted as an insult to the honour of England, and as a violation of all the traditions of philanthropy. Few paused to consider who was the author of the concession, few to consider what that concession meant; almost all were as ready with their blame as but a short while before they had been prodigal of their praise. The implacable enemy of slavery was now its friend, and in the name of England had declared his change of front. What would the world say to this, and what could England say to the man who, however exceptional his character and career, had thus misrepresented her? Perhaps this proclamation,* in Europe the motive of so much silliness and ill-feeling, did more than anything else towards enabling Gordon to win Khartoum. From the moment it reached the town the attitude of the inhabitants changed; sullen apathy was converted into joyful expectation, and thousands who had been ready to welcome the Mahdi became eager to show homage to Gordon.

* See Appendix 5.

It was altogether a brilliant diplomatic conception, the work of a man who thoroughly understood the character of the people whom he addressed. It restored to those people rights of which they had been robbed, and which they were now in a position to regain for themselves whenever they would. Yet in the simple gift of what was already theirs lay the opportunity of avoiding much bloodshed and misery — an opportunity which Gordon's insights into national characteristics enabled him to understand, and his rapidity of action enabled him to grasp. By the treaty of 1877, the Soudanese were permitted to hold their slaves until the year 1889; and this treaty was made when Egypt had no notion of relinquishing her possession of the country. Yet it was known to be useless, as its conditions could never have been carried out. The avowed object of Gordon's mission to the Soudan was to remove the Egyptians, and to hand it back to its own children, an operation which in itself involved the permission to hold slaves for ever. Had Gordon said, "I come to concede you the Soudan, which is, when I leave, to be governed as you wish, but after 1889 you must not hold slaves," the Soudanese and the whole of Europe would have thought him mad; but as he said, "I come to concede to you the Soudan, which is, when I

leave, to be governed as you wish, so that you will have the right to hold slaves as long as you like," it was only the Soudanese who were able to see the sense and value of the concession, and to call its author mad was a privilege reserved for certain European philanthropists.

CHAPTER V.

A CHANGE OF FRONT.

ON February 18th Gordon entered his capital. The people, as he passed through the city, crowded in hundreds about him, and, kissing his hands, saluted him the saviour of Kordofan. His first address encouraged the hope he would now be the saviour of Khartoum. "I come without soldiers, but with God on my side," he said, "to redress the evils of this land. I will not fight with any weapons but justice. There shall be no more Bashi-Bazouks." His promise had scarcely been bruited abroad among the people ere he had given them earnest of his sincerity. Summoning the officials, he held a levee at the Muderich, to which he invited the rich and the poor alike. To all who had complaints he gave a hearing. This over, he ordered all the Government books to be collected, and heaped up outside the Palace and burned, together with all the kourbashes whips, and implements of torture. He visited the hospital and the arsenal, and passing to the jail,

flung open its doors. The condition of the prisoners was terrible. Two hundred men, women, and children, of all ages, were lying about in chains; some were innocent, some guilty; but most of these last had served a term of punishment far in excess of the law's demands. A rapid inspection and a careful enquiry were followed by an order to strike off all chains, and set the wretched creatures free. In several cases it appeared that there was no record of any charge, and the gaolers could not even say what they had been imprisoned for. One woman had been lying there for fifteen years for a crime committed in childhood. Many were only prisoners of war; and others, immured for months, had been merely charged, but neither convicted nor even tried.

Hussein Pasha Cheri, ex-Vice-Governor of Khartoum, who left for Cairo the day before Gordon's arrival, was responsible for the maintenance and condition of this monument of injustice; and he for innumerable iniquities besides. He had recently flogged the brother of one influential citizen to death; he had threatened to flog a young boy to death in order to obtain from him certain evidence; and he had bastinadoed an old Sheik until the tendons of his feet were laid bare. This poor creature was carried into Gordon's presence; and

after the interview, a telegram was sent to Cairo, in which Gordon desired £50 to be stopped from Hussein's pay for the benefit of the man he had so disgracefully mutilated. At night-fall he ordered a bonfire to be made of the prison; and within an hour it was in flames. Far into the night men, women, and children were dancing round the blaze, laughing and clapping their hands.

On the day of his arrival Gordon heard of the intention to relieve Tokar, and he telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring that the British Admiral should make it known to rebel chiefs that if they had wrongs and took them personally, or sent them by any representative, to Khartoum, the British Envoy there was invested with full powers of redress. The British Admiral, however, said he could not ask the chiefs to leave their people and go off to meet Gordon at Khartoum at a time when English troops were about to be sent against them.

Next day he established boxes into which the people could drop petitions and complaints, and the proclamation of freedom was posted on every wall. These petition-boxes, which were similar to those he had established in 1877, were examined daily, and if any official were found guilty of not allowing the petitioner the full benefits of the proclamation, he was immediately punished.

Gordon's next move was to free two more gates and to proclaim a free market; hitherto only one gate had been open, and the minor authorities were in the habit of demanding backsheesh from all who used it. Notice was also given here, as at Berber, that half the taxes would be remitted and all arrears of taxation would be wiped off. At first sight it would seem that to talk of taxation at all, in the same breath with concession of the country must be a contradiction; but it should be remembered that the country could not be handed back in a day, and that for the moment Gordon was its administrator, and responsible for its Government. Thus he did everything to conciliate the people, and to make them willing and anxious to co-operate with him in his endeavour to restore their land to a peaceful condition, so that he might conduct the evacuation with the least possible risk, and also train them up in the way in which they could afterwards arrange their own Government on a just basis.

In a few days an order was given that all Sudanese were to remain in Khartoum, and the white troops were to proceed to Ondurman, on the other side of the White Nile, thence to be sent down the river in detachments with their families and such Europeans as wished to go. A negro, who had served under Bazaine, and received the Legion of

Honour for service in the Mexican campaign, was made commandant of the troops in Khartoum, and the appointment was entirely popular. Everything for the time was *couleur de rose*; the people were happy and content with the prospect before them, and Gordon was doubtless right when he told Colonel Coëtlogon that Khartoum had been in imminent danger, not from an external enemy, but from its own inhabitants, who, bullied by the effete government of Hussein, took sides with the rulers in El Obeid. He said moreover to that officer when he bade him good-bye, "Rest assured you leave this place as safe as Kensington Park." No wonder, then, that Mr. Power, the *Times* correspondent, telegraphed home how Gordon was doing wonders in Khartoum.

So far we have seen how, from the moment he set foot in the Soudan, he was welcomed as a saviour, and how he strengthened his position by repeated acts of kindness and mercy. It is now necessary to see how the welcome he received, and the condition in which he found those who received him, induced him to suggest that Her Majesty's Government should modify the hard and fast line of policy they had adopted, and employed him to carry out. He saw that the Khartoumese were longing for a ruler who must needs be strong but

would yet be just, and there was no such ruler to be found amongst them. He saw that, unless a man were forthcoming whom they knew and could follow, in giving them back their territory, he was only forcing them to join the Madhi. He had hoped that the petty kings would have been strong enough to defend themselves; he now saw they were nothing of the kind, and that as the emissaries of the Madhi advanced, they would enlist the service of each petty king and his dependants, or eat him and his people up. Khartoum was safe as long as he was there to govern; but when he left, there would be anarchy unless a strong ruler reigned in his stead. With these reflections he wrote a memorandum to Sir Evelyn Baring, and requested him to advise H.M. Government upon it. The time was coming, he said, when the Egyptian element in the Soudan would be removed, and we should be face to face with the task of administering the country, and he would have to withdraw; and that his doing so without providing a suitable successor would be the signal for general anarchy, which would be a misfortune and an inhuman action. As a remedy he suggested that H.M. Government should give a commission to his successor, with the same moral support as was given to the Ameer in Afghanistan. Zebehr the man he suggested, was, perhaps, his

only enemy, and he urged the appointment because the Black Pasha was still a power in the Soudan, liked by the people, and capable of controlling them. Having detailed the terms which should accompany the nomination, he recommended that Zebehr should be made a K.C.M.G., and showed how his ten years' exile, the recent events, and his association with Europeans must have affected his character. Colonel Stewart endorsed this new line of policy, and urged that it would greatly facilitate the evacuation of the country; but he was not sure that Zebehr Pasha was the right man. Sir Evelyn Baring approved of the policy and of Zebehr, but would not countenance any meeting between Zebehr and Gordon in the Soudan.* H.M. Government returned a decisive reply. They notified that there existed the gravest objections to the appointment, by their authority, of a successor to General Gordon; and that, as far as they could see, no necessity appeared to have arisen for going beyond the suggestions contained in Gordon's Memorandum of the 22nd ult. They added that public opinion would not tolerate the appointment of Zebehr Pasha.

On February the 23rd Gordon received the news of the fall of Tokar, and he at once telegraphed, H.M. Government to remain quiet, as he saw no

* See Appendix 6.

advantage to be gained by any action. He suggested that events should be allowed to work themselves out, and considered that the fall of Tokar would in no way affect the state of affairs at Khartoum. The Government intended to act, if possible, upon Gordon's suggestion; but Admiral Hewett showed the importance of an advance, saying that a decisive victory was necessary to establish order in the neighbourhood of Suakim. The Government then sent another telegram, saying that General Graham should, if possible, before attacking, summon the chiefs to disband their forces and attend Gordon at Khartoum for the settlement of the Soudan. This General Graham did; but his reply was returned, and El-Teb was fought and won.

Hitherto we have seen the effects of Gordon's peace policy upon all the people with whom he came into contact; we must now consider the state of affairs among those whom he had been unable to reach, but to whom his proclamation had been sent. The strength of the rebellion was at El-Obeid. The Sennaar garrison was hemmed in by raiding tribes only, and the greater part of the country between Suakim and Kassala was either in open revolt or was watching the tide of events before deciding with whom it should throw in its fortunes. Many

tribes round Khartoum, Shendy, Berber, and Dongola were disaffected and troublesome, and therefore a source of danger to the towns in their neighbourhood. Numbers of these had not yet sent in their submission, though Gordon had given them plenty of time; and unless they did, they might seriously interfere with the process of evacuation. Considering, on February 27th, that they had had notice enough, Gordon, hearing that a gang of rebels were on their way from Sennaar to Khartoum, determined on a demonstration. Before doing so, however, he issued a new Proclamation, the text of which has given rise to much unnecessary comment.* Its substance was to the effect that, having since his arrival constantly assured the people of justice and good treatment and advised them to desist from rebellion, which leads to wars and bloodshed, he was now resolved to use severe measures with those who had not followed his advice. British troops were on their way to Khartoum, and whoever persisted in bad conduct would be treated as he deserved. The statement that British troops were on their way to Khartoum, is, of course, inexplicable. It was probably due to the fact that Gordon had heard that British troops were advancing along the Souakim-Berber

* See Appendix 7.

route. Information as to what was taking place on this road was difficult to obtain, and uncertain when received, as the Hadendowa rebellion had blocked it up.

Colonel Stewart was despatched up the White Nile to explain the original Proclamation. He found the country quiet on both banks for some fifteen or twenty miles, but beyond that limit the left bank was dangerous. At the first disaffected village he reached, he succeeded in interviewing some of the villagers. They appeared glad to see him, especially when they heard his mission was one of peace. Having expounded the Proclamation, he halted for the night, expecting to see the Sheikhs in the morning. Instead of meeting them, however, he found the village occupied by about 500 men. The rebels were partly armed with rifles, and some firing took place. Stewart then steamed an hour further up the river, until he came to another village, occupied by a large body of infantry and many horsemen. It appeared that only a few days previously the Sheikh had received a commission from the Mahdi, appointing him Governor of the district, and at the same time ordering him not to cross the river for the present, but merely to collect all the men, horses, arms, and provisions he could. No shot was fired, though the rebels followed the steamer a considerable

distance as Stewart returned towards the friendly villages. There he had a satisfactory interview with the Sheikhs, who told him that in the event of a forward movement by the rebels—which was daily expected—unless they were protected by the Government, they would have to join them in self-defence, as they had no available means of defence. This was exactly what Gordon himself foresaw, when he found that it was useless to restore the country to the petty kings unless a stronger than the Mahdi—a cord for the faggot—were first placed over them. Gordon now prepared an elaborate memorandum,* showing the impossibility, in case of evacuation, of providing any defence for the towns, unless a Governor were first appointed with sufficient funds to raise and equip a native army. The only other scheme he could suggest was that of setting up a Governor and a Meglis in each large town, to be responsible for government and administration of taxes in their own district. This would demand an expenditure on the part of the Egyptian Government for some time of about £70,000 a year, and even then would not prevent the probability of anarchy. If, however, an outbreak did eventually occur, there would be no fear of massacre, as the troops would all be natives. The main question at

* See Appendix 8.

issue, therefore, was whether Egypt could or would find the annual subsidy. Before H.M. Government received this memorandum Gordon was informed that they would not personally authorize the appointment of a successor, and that Zebehr was out of the question; he also received a telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring, asking, among other things, whether he could suggest any one besides Zebehr. His reply, dated Feb. 26th, was in the negative. The Mahdi's agents, he said, were active in all directions; and, though there was no fear at present that the prophet would leave El Obeid, it was certain that he would occupy Khartoum the moment the evacuation was over. Gordon saw the possibility of evacuation, but none of establishing a government unless the Soudanese were given a ruler stronger than the Mahdi, or unless the Mahdi were "smashed up." Unpopular as the impostor was, the people would have to join him in self-defence, as there would be no one else for them to look to; and the moment he obtained possession of Khartoum, he would become a serious menace to Egypt proper. Gordon ended by strongly urging the Government to change their policy, and to break down the power of the Mahdi as soon as possible; and, as a first step towards this result, he recommended that two hundred

Indian troops be sent to Wady-Halfa, and an officer detached to Dongola, under pretence that quarters were required for the troops.

In commenting upon this telegram, Sir Evelyn Baring showed how, with the altered condition of affairs, the Government had now to decide upon one of two courses:* either the Soudan must be evacuated and abandoned entirely without any effort on our part to establish a settled government; or a strong endeavour must be made to replace the former Egyptian administration by another. Gordon had urged the latter course as the right one from every point of view — political, military, and financial, humane; and Sir Evelyn Baring entirely agreed with him. The alteration in Gordon's programme was, after all, more apparent than real, as his memorandum of the 22nd of Jan. was only a preliminary sketch of the line to be pursued, and referred specifically to the difficulties of providing rulers for Khartoum, Dongola, and other places where there were no old families to recall. With these difficulties he was now face to face; and to surmount them he held that he must either bring down Zubeir, or smash up the Mahdi. H.M. Government now seriously reconsidered the arguments already advanced in favour of appointing Zubeir Governor-General of the

* See Appendix 9.

Soudan ;* and they asked for enlightenment on three several points. The first was the possibility that Zebehr might join the Mahdi, for Gordon believed, and had said, that Elyas, Zebehr's father-in-law, was one of the chiefs of the revolt, and probably Zebehr's own agent. The second was the consideration whether he would use his influence in furthering the development of the slave-trade; and the third involved the question of his blood-feud with Gordon, which might imperil the Governor-General's life. These difficulties Gordon and Baring endeavoured to explain away,† the Government remained unsatisfied. They were prepared to agree, they said, to any other Mahommedan assistance, and to supply any reasonable sum of money which General Gordon might consider necessary to carry out his mission. They were, moreover, prepared to extend his appointment for any reasonable length of time, if such extension would overcome the difficulty arising from the uncertainty felt by the inhabitants of the Soudan with regard to their government. But they were not prepared to send Zebehr to Khartoum, nor could they despatch troops to Berber, inasmuch as in the opinion of the military authorities, such a measure was almost impracticable during the hot season. In fact they declined

* See Appendix 10.

† See Appendix 11.

to accept the immediate alternative placed before them by Sir Evelyn Baring: evacuation with abandonment, or evacuation with pre-arranged government. They wanted a third course, and they had their desire ere long.

Meanwhile, let us see what was taking place in and around Khartoum. Halfiyeh, a small town some miles north of Khartoum, containing about 800 faithful men, to whom Gordon had given arms, was surrounded by 4,000 of the enemy, and the line of communication by steamer was cut. An attempt to run the blockade was frustrated, and three men on board the boat were wounded by the rebel fire. Gordon therefore determined to attack the besiegers on three sides: from Khartoum, from the beleaguered garrison, and with armed steamers from the river. Before this could be done the rebels paraded before Khartoum, and fired on the palace; they then pitched their tents by the water side, and during the night surprised a party of 300 men, who, through the negligence of the black troops, were left unprotected, and killed 100 of them. Next day the situation was worse; for some Chaggiahs, blockaded in Halfiyeh, escaped and went over to the rebels, who were now 6,000 strong. It seemed as though the only thing to be done was to remain in Khartoum and

act on the defensive, but Gordon determined to try and relieve the beleaguered garrison. He armed the townsmen, and started on his expedition with 1,200 men and three steamers, armoured with boiler plates, and carrying mountain guns, with wooden mantlets. The troops were stowed below, and in large iron barges, so as to be protected from the rebels who were now entrenched on the banks, and had command of the river. In a day or two the siege was raised, with a loss of only two men. The 500 soldiers of the Halfiyeh garrison were rescued and a great store of camels and horses, arms and ammunition was captured. Amid great rejoicing—indeed, according to Mr. Power, the greatest rejoicings known at Khartoum for many years—the expedition returned; but it was only to learn that the whole country around Shendy was in the hands of the rebels, and Berber itself threatened. This victory was followed by a serious reverse. The rebels were still gathering on the banks, still firing on the palace, and still harassing Khartoum; so Gordon organized another sortie, in which the Egyptian troops and Bashi-Bazouks, commanded by their own officers, took part. Gordon and Mr. Power were eye-witnesses from the palace. The latter gentleman's account of the affair we have, and a complete and graphic work it is.

The rebel lines, two miles long, and about eight miles distant, and running parallel to the Blue Nile, stretched from Halfiyeh to a group of wooded sand-hills. The troops, about 2,000 strong, marched at an early hour. The Bashi-Bazouks and Egyptian regulars were in a long line facing the enemy, and also parallel to the Blue Nile. On the left flank was a small square of Soudanese regulars with one field-gun. On the right front flank was a handful of mounted troops. As the men advanced the rebels began to file away to the right, and disappear behind the sand-hills. This supposed retreat commenced at 9.40; and at 10.30 there was not a man in sight. The enemy's rear was covered by about sixty Arabs, mounted on horses and camels. The Egyptian advance was steady enough, and the artillery fired two shells at the retiring rebels. As Gordon's horsemen entered the woods at the foot of the sand-hills, the five chiefs in command, who had been riding a little ahead, charged back upon their own ranks and broke them. At that moment the rebel cavalry shot out at full gallop from behind the sand-hills on the right, when the Egyptians broke up in confusion, and started at full speed for Khartoum. "The sixty horsemen," says Mr. Powell, "who were only armed with lances and swords, dashed about, cutting down the flying men. One Arab lancer killed seven

Egyptians in as many minutes. He then jumped off his horse to secure a rifle and ammunition, when a mounted Bashi-Bazouk officer cut him down. The rebel infantry now appeared, and rushed about in all directions, hacking at the men disabled by the cavalry charge. This slaughter continued for nearly two miles, the Egyptians not stopping to fire a shot. Then the Arabs halted, and an officer rallied some of the troops, and they commenced a dropping but harmless fire at the enemy. This continued till midday, some of the men dropping from stray bullets fired by the Arabs. The rebels then drew off to their old position, carrying a lot of rifles and cartridges, and one mountain piece. The irregulars, instead of returning into camp, coolly adjourned to a neighbouring friendly village opposite the palace. When they had completely looted this and killed some of the inhabitants, they strolled into camp."

The rout was hideous and disgraceful. Men of the Egyptian regulars and Bashi-Bazouks were crying out that they had been betrayed by their two generals. These gentlemen indeed were among the five horsemen who had started the panic by riding down their own men and breaking their own lines. Moreover, there was evidence to show that one of them had ridden up to a gun and slashed through the brain of the sergeant in charge, as he was about to lay his piece, while his comrade in treason had

cut down two artillerymen. Seven hours after the battle, no doctors had seen the wounded : they were lying among the tents, each with three or four wounds—all from the sword or spear; there were only about twenty of them, for the Arabs gave no quarter. Colonel Stewart got them on board a steamer and transferred them to the hospital. The plain was dotted with slain. All the bodies brought into the camp were wounded in the back, for such was the panic, that until the Arabs ceased from slaying, none turned to fire a shot or fix a bayonet. The Egyptian loss was about 200 killed, and the enemy's loss not more than four.

Gordon did not consider that this defeat, disgraceful as it was, would affect the situation at Khartoum, for the townspeople remained as staunch as before. One Arab came forward at once and offered to lend him a thousand guineas without interest, and another equipped, armed, and paid two hundred blacks for his service. Everywhere loyalty to Gordon was loudly proclaimed, and everywhere the conduct of the troops was as loudly condemned. Later on the disaster was explained. Surviving Soudanese declared that the two Pashas in command charged back into their own square; the soldiers, recognizing them, opened their ranks to let them through; and into the gap thus made the rebel

cavalry followed. The treachery, doubtless pre-arranged, was complete in its success, but retribution was close at hand. When the battle was over these two traitors, Said and Hassam, came into Gordon's tent, and the General offered them drink. They refused; Gordon's secretary, divining the reason, drank first, and the Pashas, who had suspected poison, followed suit. During the remainder of that day they lay hidden in their homes, for the soldiers were crying aloud for vengeance, and would have murdered them at once had they appeared in the streets. The next day they were tried by court-martial, and found guilty of communication with the enemy and of having treacherously murdered their own men. In the house of Hassan a great store of rifles and ammunition was discovered; and it was proved that both he and his colleague had stolen the two months' pay given to the troops on account of six months' arrears. They had also taken into the field with them 70 rounds of cannon ammunition, instead of eight, the usual number, so that the rebels' guns might be well supplied for future attacks on Khartoum. The trial was long and patient, but the verdict was apparent from the beginning. Hassam and Said were found guilty, and on the same evening, amid expressions of

universal delight, they were shot by the men they had betrayed. The scenes at Khartoum were, during this time full of interest and excitement. Every day the palace was shelled or pock-marked with rifle bullets; but the General, though he spent the greater part of the time in his verandah, was untouched. Many fell about him, some at his feet, but the old charm was still his.

One day there was a strange scene. Three armed dervishes arrived from the Mahdi and demanded audience. It was immediately granted. Their mission was to return the robes of honour which Gordon had sent to their prophet, and to announce his refusal of the Sultanate of Kordofan. They handed Gordon a dervish's dress and a letter, calling upon him to become a Mussulman at once, and to embrace the cause of Mahommed Achmet, the Mahdi. From this moment it was recognised that Gordon had, as usual, been right. The policy of conciliation was a failure; the Mahdi was daily gaining ground and increasing the number of his emissaries; and evacuation was only possible by force of arms. Gordon, with his usual promptitude, accepted the situation; and ordered all Egyptian soldiers already on their way through the desert from Abu Hamed to Korosko to return to Khartoum without delay.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEFENCE OF KHARTOUM.

At this date H.M. Government received telegrams from Gordon which represented a reply to their question of March 11th. The question was, it will be recollected, whether an extension of his appointment as Governor-General would or would not enable him to overcome the difficulties with which he had now to deal. I have to say "which represented the reply," because the telegram containing the actual question was sent on March 11th, and Gordon received no telegram between March 20th and April 8th, excepting a supplementary message to the effect that neither Zebehr nor troops could be allowed him. Yet the question was answered as though it had been foreseen. Gordon telegraphed that in the present state of affairs it was impossible to withdraw the Cairene employees from Khartoum without permitting the town to fall into the hands of the Mahdi's emissaries, and losing therewith all hope of saving the garrisons

of Kassala, Sennaar, Berber, Dongola, and the Bahr-Gazelle; that there was now no probability that the Soudanese would rally round him, or accept his Proclamation; and that the retreat to Berber might be out of his power in a few more days, and even if attempted at once might fail. He added, in another telegram, that if the immediate evacuation of Khartoum were determined upon, irrespective of outlying towns, he would endeavour to send all the Cairene employees and white troops with Colonel Stewart to Berber, and then request H.M. Government to accept the resignation of his commission. Thereafter he purposed to conduct all steamers and stores up to the Equatorial and Bahr-Gazelle provinces, and take possession of those provinces for the King of the Belgians, who had given him written authority to annex them.

In a later telegram he intimated that through the weakness of the Government many had joined the rebels, and that before long Khartoum would be blockaded. Zebehr's usefulness was also declared to be greatly diminished by reason of the fact that a great number of the would-be loyal had been forced to join the enemy and it was noted that speed was of the utmost importance should the Government decide under these circumstances to send an ex-

pedition to Berber. It is scarcely worth while, for the present, to refer to any more telegrams sent by the Government; as far as Gordon was concerned, they were waste paper, for he never received them. All he knew between March 10th and April 8th was that he was to have neither Zebehr nor troops, and must do the best he could without them; but before receiving the telegram of two lines which conveyed this intelligence, he expressed his thanks to H.M. Government, to Sir Evelyn Baring, to the Khedive, and the Egyptian Ministers, for their support, and acknowledged that he had received every assistance he could have expected. In this there is no touch of satire: only a few days before Gordon had said that as he had been inconsistent about Zebehr, he should bear the blame if Zebehr were sent, and put up with the inconvenience if he were not. The aforesaid telegram, ironic as it reads, was only the expression of a simple and unselfish desire to assume all responsibility. The scroll of events was partly unrolled, and Gordon was accepting them as for the best.

From this point onward Gordon's difficulties albeit apparently increased, were in reality diminished, from the circumstance that he had no one to rely upon but himself and a few followers. The Egyptian Government was a cypher and H.M. Govern-



ment an unknown quantity ; he was, by force of circumstances, free to act as he thought fit, and in that freedom lay his opportunity of success. The rebels were hemming him in, and absorbing those who would have remained loyal if they could. There were traitors in his own camp, and there were faint hearts and doubters as well. Was the ship sinking, or could the captain stop the leak, and keep her afloat ? There had been a sail in sight, and she had seen his signals of distress, but had not altered her course. She had only signalled back, "Take to your boats and come to us ; we cannot afford to send a boat to you." But the captain would not desert his ship ; his cargo, a cargo of honour in all things and justice to all men, was too precious to be surrendered. Anxiously he searched the horizon for another sail, but he searched it in vain. Then he called his crew on deck, and bade them help themselves. He made them haul down the useless signal of distress, showed them how to patch the hole, encouraged them to work with will, and said the time for taking to the boats was not yet come. Clouds were gathering overhead, the sea was rising, and waves were breaking in. The sail was disappearing in a mist, and night was near ; but while there was light he meant to hope and work, and when it was dark to trust in

God. There was no thought for himself, for all his thoughts belonged to others; no sign of fear, for fear he had never known. He only lived to do his duty, and his duty was to save his cargo and his crew.

The Mahdi's prospects had greatly improved. There were no rebels about Sennaar, but between Sennaar and Khartoum they had hemmed in Saleh Bey. The main strength of the rebellion was still at El Obeid, the head quarters in Kordofan; but Kassala, Khartoum, Shendy, and Berber were surrounded, and Dongola was threatened. The Suakim-Berber and Suakim-Kassala routes were blocked by the Hadendowas, now in open revolt and likely within a short time to be joined by their neighbours, the Bisharcens. Wherever the Mahdi's emissaries had travelled they had recruited their ranks, first from the disaffected and then from the would-be loyal. It was the knowledge of this which made Gordon openly express his sorrow at having to fight against men who would have been his allies if he could have given them any support; but it was now entirely a question of self-defence, and those who might have been friends had to be dealt with as old and bitter foes. It was still Gordon's opinion that the revolt was essentially trumpery, and might be put

down by 500 determined men. But such men were not to be found in Khartoum, nor anywhere in the Soudan. His appeal for Turkish troops, 3,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, had been fruitless. Political considerations interfered; H.M. Government refused their sanction; it was impossible for the Egyptian Government to organize an irregular Turkish force in time to be of use at all. Everything had to be accomplished from within, for nothing was to be expected from without; and when a month had passed, and no word came from home, it seemed as though all interest in the Soudan had ceased. It was then that Gordon expressed his bitter indignation, and his determination to act alone and accept the sole responsibility. He declared he would never abandon a garrison who had not abandoned him, without making every effort for their release, whether such efforts were diplomatically correct or not. He had borrowed money from the people and called upon them to sell their grain at a low price, and whatever now their lot was also to be his. He would hold on as long as possible, and suppress the rebellion if he could. If he could not he would retire to the Equator with all who would follow him, and leave to H.M. Government "the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Sennaar, Kassala,

Berber and Dongola." He concluded with another solemn warning that smashing the Mahdi was an absolute necessity if peace were to be retained in Egypt; and that it was an operation which would soon be attended with the greatest difficulties.

He had scarcely made known his intentions to H.M. Government when they received urgent and piteous appeals from Hussin Khalifa at Berber* "The Government having abandoned us," he said, "we can only trust in God." The rebels were advancing, and there was a panic in the town. All who could were leaving. The Mahdi had nominated another governor, who had raised the northern portion of the province. The villages rose at his approach, and there were only sixty cases of ammunition in Berber. But all appeal was in vain. H.M. Government replied that no immediate assistance could be given, as there was no force at hand to give it: an expedition to Berber would take sixteen weeks, and help was wanted in sixteen hours. And they folded their hands, and waited "for something to turn up."

News from those in Khartoum could come to us, though nothing came from us to them. When the Mahdi's dervishes reached the city, the number of its inhabitants was already reduced by 3,000 souls,

* See Appendix 12.

whom Gordon had enabled to leave for Korosko. When Gordon declined the dress and the order to become a Believer the dervishes waxed insolent, and refused not only to disarm in the presence of the Governor-General, but grasped their hilts with a gesture of defiance. Without concerning himself with this breach of etiquette, Gordon quietly sat down and dictated his reply to the Mahdi, addressing him as "Sheik," and signifying thereby that his appointment as Sultan of Kordofan was cancelled. This reply was given to his emissaries, who were then taken to the gates.

His next care now was to see for how long the town was provisioned; he found that it would be possible to stand a five month's siege. He then began to carefully arrange his plan of defence, which also included a plan of attack, and in which he repeated the tactics he had used in China. Emissaries were sent out on every hand, to offer freedom to all slaves who would abandon their masters and come in to Khartoum; but only a few accepted the terms, for they knew they would have to fight if they were once inside the city gates, whereas while they remained without there was a chance to cut and run. Daily rations were issued to the poor, and a paper currency was established, which enabled Gordon to pay off the arrears due to

such soldiers as had not deserted, and by this means to keep them faithful. The ammunition was removed to the mission station on the river, so that it might be safe in the event of an artillery attack on the fortifications; and around the walls, with crowsfeet, broken glass, wire entanglements, *chevaux de frise*, and so forth, three lines of land torpedoes or percussion mines were arranged. The health of the town was good, and the Nile was rising: the latter an all-important fact for Gordon, who was dependant upon the river for the success of his offensive operations.

But he did not wait upon the river to retrieve the disaster which had befallen his troops among the sandhills. Within a week he sent a steamer up the Blue Nile, with a Krupp gun on a barge; good practice was made; the rebels on the bank were shelled, and forty of them were killed. The next day was marked by a mutiny among the Bashi-Bazouks, when 250 of them were disarmed. Then another successful attack was directed against the rebel camp, while a sortie was made from Khartoum during which the enemy were beaten back with heavy loss. Two days afterwards they were badly defeated again: 16 horses were captured and 40 of their men were killed and 8 wounded. As the Nile rose the Governor-General's swoops be-

came more frequent and more rapid. He armoured all his steamers with bullet-proof plates made of soft wood and iron; and he cuirassed all his barges in the same way, and built up on each of them a castle 20ft. in height, which gave a double line of fire. These improvised monitors did excellent service in clearing the banks by day; but the rebels were always strong enough to return at night, and would usually keep up a fire against the Palace until daybreak. More than once they attempted an assault, but the torpedoes created such havoc among them that they failed to reach the city walls. During all this time—March and April—H.M. Government had something like definite information as to the state of affairs. Then followed a long interval of darkness, preceded by the fall of Berber, the link between Khartoum and the world. Hussein Khalifa having been authorized by H.M. Government to do as he liked, elected to retire northwards, and telegraphed to Mr. Egerton that for the future money could not guarantee the delivery of any message to Khartoum, whose inhabitants were now at the mercy of the enemy. In the interval four divisions of Shageeyah Bedouins, together with 500 soldiers, had joined the rebels; and the capital was thus made isolated and helpless.

From May to the end of September was a time of silence, broken now and then by conflicting rumours, to the effect that Gordon and Stewart had been killed or taken prisoners, and that Khartoum was the headquarters of the Mahdi. The evidence upon which these rumours were circulated could never bear investigation; and Europe kept on hoping, almost without hope, wearily and anxiously awaiting the issue of H.M. Government's policy. The opening scenes of this policy had been criticised as farcical, but the close suggested tragedy. With September came the last of the five months allotted to the garrison of Khartoum, and as the month drew nearer to its end the tension became more painful. There was little sense of relief when it was known that H.M. Government had arranged an expedition to assist their Envoy. There were a few to whom it seemed highly probable that Gordon would avenge himself by relieving the expedition; but to most men it seemed as if H.M. Government had pushed the principle of procrastination too far. A starving garrison, beleaguered by fanatical and savage hordes,—that was the picture which forced itself upon the world; and the central figures were two devoted Englishmen, doomed to death by the country they had done their best to serve.

The morning of the 29th September will long be

remembered in England, for on that morning the *Times* relieved the aching hearts of a multitude. Great news from Mr. Power at Khartoum had arrived the previous evening. I give the diary of events, beginning with the first of May and ending with the last day in July. It shows the work accomplished by Gordon, Stewart, and Power, the three Englishmen in Khartoum :—

“ *May 1st.*—The officer commanding engineers having put down a mine of 78lb. of powder trod on it, and with six soldiers was blown to pieces.

“ *May 3rd.*—A man reported an English army at Berber.

“ *May 6th.*—Heavy attack from the Arabs at the Blue Nile end of the works; great loss of life from mines we had placed at Buri.

“ *May 7th.*—Great attack from a village opposite; nine mines were exploded there, and we afterwards heard that they killed 115 rebels. The Arabs kept up a fire all day. Colonel Stewart, with two splendidly directed shots from a Krupp 20-pounder at the Palace, drove them out of their principal position. During the night the Arabs loopholed the walls, but on the 9th we drove them out. They had held the place for three days.

“ *May 25th.*—Colonel Stewart, while working a

mitrailleuse at the Palace, was wounded by the rebel fire, but he is now quite well.

"May 26th.—During an expedition up the White Nile Saati Bey put a shell into an Arab magazine. There was a great explosion, 60 shells going off.

"During May and June steamer expeditions were made daily under Saati Bey. Our loss was slight, and much cattle were captured.

"June 25th.—Mr. Cuzzi, English Consul at Berber, who is with the rebels, came to our lines, and told us of the fall of Berber. Mr. Cuzzi has been sent to Kordofan.

"June 30th.—Saati Bey captured 40 ardebs of corn from the rebels, and killed 200 of them.

"July 10th.—Saati Bey having burnt Kalakla and three villages, attacked Gatarneb, but, with three of his officers, was killed. Colonel Stewart had a narrow escape. Saati's loss is serious.

"July 29th.—We beat the rebels out of Buri, on the Blue Nile, killing numbers of them and capturing munitions and 80 rifles. The steamers advanced to El Efan, clearing 13 rebel forts and breaking two cannon. Since the siege began our loss has been under 700 killed.

"July 31st.—This is the end of the fifth month of the siege. Yesterday I sent you *via* Kassala a despatch giving the situation here and the chief

incidents of the siege since March 23rd. I wrote you several times each week up to April 23rd, when all hopes of men getting through to Berber had ceased. For the last five months the siege has been very close, the Arab bullets from all sides being able to fall into the Palace.

“ Since March 17th no day has passed without firing, yet our losses in all at the very outside are not 700 killed. We have had a good many wounded, but as a rule the wounds are slight. Since the siege General Gordon has caused biscuit and corn to be distributed to the poor, and up to this time there has been no case of anyone seriously wanting food. Everything has gone up about 3,000 per cent. in price, and meat is, when you can get it, 8s. or 9s. an ober. The classes who cannot accept relief suffer most.

“ Since the despatch which arrived the day before yesterday all hope of relief by our Government is at an end, so when our provisions, which we have at a stretch for two months, are eaten we must fall, nor is there any chance, with the soldiers we have, and the great crowd of women, children, &c., of our being able to cut our way through the Arabs. We have not steamers for all, and it is only from the steamers we can meet the rebels.

“ One Arab horseman is enough to put 200 of the

bulk of our men to flight. The day Saati Bey was killed eight men with spears charged 200 of our men armed with Remingtons. The soldiers fled at once, leaving Saati and his Vakeel to be killed. A black officer cut down three of the Arabs, and the other five chased our men. A horseman coming up rode through the flying mass, cutting down seven. Colonel Stewart, who was unarmed, got off by a fluke, the Arabs not having seen him. With such men as these we can do nothing. The negroes are the only men we can depend upon.

“The attack made by the Soudani troops under Mehemet Ali Pasha, on the 28th of this month, was most successful; the Arab loss must have been very heavy. As General Gordon has forbidden the soldiers to bring in the heads of rebels they kill, it is now hard to know the exact number. We captured that day 16 shells and cartouches for mountain gun, a quantity of rifle ammunition, 78 Remingtons, a number of elephant and other rifles, nearly 200 lances, 60 swords, and some horses. Our loss was four killed and some slightly wounded. This action has cleared away the rebels, who day and night have been firing into our lines at Buri, on the Blue Nile.

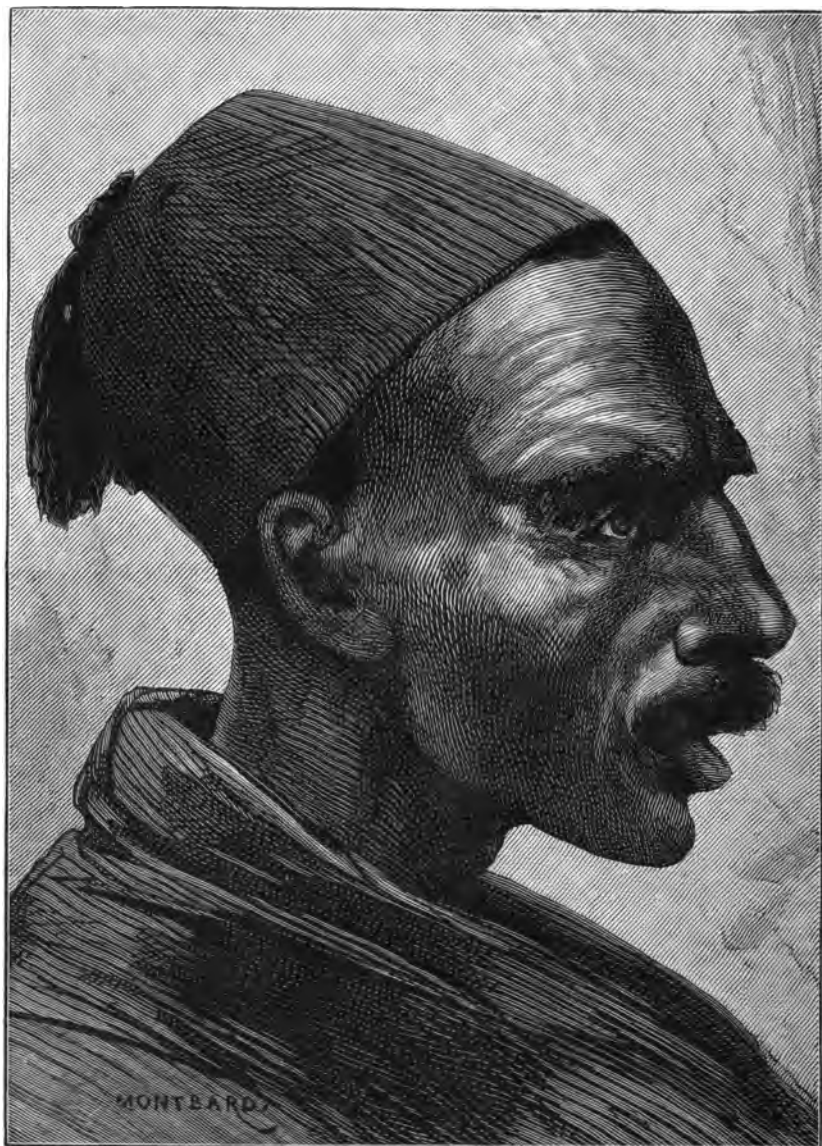
“The following day (29th inst.) a flotilla of five armoured steamers and four armoured barges, with

castles on them, went up to Gareff, on the Blue Nile. I went with them. On the way up we cleared 13 small forts, but at Gareff found two large strong forts—earthworks rivetted with trunks of palm trees. There were two cannons in one. For eight hours we engaged these forts, and with the Krupp 20-pounder disabled their two cannons. The Arab fire was terrific, but, owing to the bullet-proof armour on all the vessels, our loss was only three killed and 12 or 13 wounded. Towards the evening we drove the rebels, who were in great numbers, out of the forts.

“In three days General Gordon will send two steamers towards Sennaar. It is hoped they will retake the steamer ‘Mehemet Ali,’ which the rebels took from Saleh Bey. General Gordon is quite well, and Colonel Stewart has quite recovered from his wound. I am quite well and happy.”

A thrill of pride and great joy was felt by every Englishman who read this record of the noblest of real romances. Then followed a thrill of pain: the words—“*So when our provisions, which we have at a stretch for two months, are eaten we must fall,*” stood out in heart-rending relief, and recalled the half-forgotten fact that these lines, read on September 29th, were written on July 31st. August had passed away, and September had but one day left; what were the Englishmen in Khartoum doing now?





PORTRAIT OF ZEBEHR PASHA.

CHAPTER VII.

GORDON AND ZEBEHR.

DURING an interval of suspense, it is worth considering the subject of Zebehr Rahama, the black Pasha. Among the arguments against his appointment was one which the Government were most anxious to employ, and this was the fact of his complicity in the Revolt of the Slave-Dealers of 1879. But there were serious obstacles in the way, the most serious the absence of documentary evidence. This became especially the case when in the thick of the controversy as to the wisdom of his reinstatement the Black Pasha came forward and gratuitously denied his complicity. Moreover his denial was so emphatic, and was backed by so circumstantial a statement that for the moment the position was embarrassing. This was not because the Government believed his story, but because public feeling on the matter ran high, and to put an end to the question once and for all they desired to show the Opposition that the employment of a rebel was not, in their view, the way to curb

rebellion.* On general principles they were no doubt right; but in this particular case, which was one of opportunism, they were wrong. Zebehr's innocence or guilt in the past had nothing to do with it. Had Gordon heard his story he would unhesitatingly have declared it a lie. But this would have in no way altered his opinion as to Zebehr's fitness for the Kingship of the Soudan. No man knew better the measure of Zebehr's iniquities than the slayer of Suleiman. What the Government therefore had to do was not to prove this or that, nor to be satisfied or dissatisfied with antecedents; but to resolve whether so bold a policy as their Envoy's did or did not suit them. As we know they decided that it did not; and the question of wisdom or unwisdom need not here be discussed. As, however, much doubt has been raised by the controversy with regard to Zebehr's innocence or guilt, it is but right to set at rest a matter which has engaged so much of the public attention. This I can do by the production of documentary evidence such as not even Zebehr can gainsay.

Let us first take Zebehr's own account of himself; for by this means we shall be in a better position to estimate the worth of what follows. It should be mentioned that when it was published, Gordon had

* See Appendix 13.

just requested the Egyptian Government to remit Zebehr five thousand pounds, declaring a recent confiscation of his property in the Soudan to be unjust, and requesting them to restore his goods forthwith. These facts aroused in Zebehr admiration for the man he called his enemy; but they did not awaken in him the faintest sense of truth. Like all Orientals he is a natural liar. As a preface to his story, he remarks that he had rendered greater services to Egypt than any living man, and in return had been as badly used as a subject could be. For his country's treatment of him he cared nothing; but Gordon's accusations "cut his heart out." He then went straight to the subject of his son's connection with the rebellion, and explained the treatment he received at the hands of Gordon's lieutenants. The explanation is daring; it is characteristic of the man who but a few months before accused Gordon of Suleiman's murder, and dared him to justify it by the production of evidence which he himself had supplied. He said that, on the occasion of Gordon's first visit to Cairo, he had himself gone to him protesting his innocence, and offering to go up with him into the Soudan and prove to him the falseness of the accusations. This Gordon had refused, but had told him to write to Suleiman and command him

to submit. This Zebehr declares he did, telling his son that Gordon went up as the Khedive's representative and as his own; that he was to treat him as his master and lord; if he wished, to serve him as a slave, and to obey his lightest word. To Gordon he gave a letter to the same purport, and, accompanying him to the station, commended his son of sixteen years to his protection, to watch over as his own. After that he had no fear. The two men met, and Suleiman was treated with the greatest kindness, receiving a rank and the appointment to the Governorship of the Bahr-Gazelle. In acknowledgment of these favours, he sent presents to his patron, including a hundred and eighty tons of ivory. Soon after this one Edrees, a servant of the house of Zebehr, deserted to Gordon and told him that Suleiman was a traitor, working against the Government. Gordon listened and believed. Suleiman was disgraced, and Edrees was promoted to his place. When Zebehr's son heard this, he sent nine Ulemas to assure the Governor-General of his respect and loyalty. But it was in vain. Gordon took the envoys and shot them to a man. And when Suleiman sent two more he shot these also.

At this point Zebehr naïvely remarked that he could not understand such treatment of ambassadors. He then went on to tell how Suleiman re-

solved to go himself to the Governor-General, and started with twelve hundred followers for Dara, where he believed his Second Father to be. Six miles from the place, he learned that Gordon was at Khartoum. He turned to follow, and was met by a hundred and fifty soldiers under Gessi, who, without parley, summoned him to surrender. He protested that he should not be treated as an enemy. Gessi replied that he was Gordon's representative, and that Suleiman would best show his loyalty by coming with him. Suleiman said that if Gessi would give him his solemn word that the charges against him should be properly sifted he would at once surrender and abide by the sentence. This, added Zebehr, was the greater proof of his loyalty, as he and his men so far outnumbered Gessi that had he wished he could easily have taken that captain prisoner. But Gessi gave his word; and Suleiman ordered his escort to lay down their arms. For six or seven days Gessi and he were friends, eating at the same table and living in each other's company. On the tenth day, however, Gessi called to him Suleiman and others of his family. They heard and obeyed, and found him seated under a great tree. In five minutes he had shot them all.

"I do not believe Gordon ever gave him the

order to do such an act," says the gifted narrator in conclusion, "for Gordon is a strangely merciful man. He cannot speak our language, and so is often apt to get wrong impressions; but I do not think he would have shot my son without hearing him. However, that is a thing of the past. I have forgiven him, as we all hope to be forgiven. Gessi died at Suez afterwards, and God will judge between him and me at the Last Day. I do not know how the idea has got abroad that I am a slave-dealer. Of course, there was slavery in my country, and has always been; but I never sold a human being. My people serve me gladly for the love they bear me. Let anyone go into my country and ask if Zebehr ever unjustly oppressed or killed a man, woman, or child. God is my witness, and I swear to you most solemnly that the charge against me is false. And is England afraid of a broken man like me? Can she not order me to put down slavery, and am I not forced to obey her commands? Am I a fool, if England sent me up, to go against her behests? I am a soldier, and under authority, and the orders given me by God's permission I will carry out to the last letter, as I have always done. And as for the pacification of the country, so confident am I of my people's love, that I will go up alone among them, returning joyfully to my dear

home, and I shall be received everywhere with the kisses of peace."

This pleasing romance is Zebehr's version of his son's experience and fate, as related to a friend of the present writer, and repeated at large by their amiable author. There is nothing extraordinary in the statements, considering their origin; like the conversation before Sir Evelyn Baring, they are only another example of Oriental plausibility and cunning. They deceived many, they converted some; but they failed to affect one jot the vital question of the hour—their author's reinstatement in the Soudan. It is only the habit of falsehood that can at all account for such effrontery. Zebehr's praise of Gordon, the forgiveness of his enemy, are inspirations conceived in the fervour of lying. Zebehr knew that he lied; he knew that in Gordon's hands was a refutation that would scatter these falsehoods to the wind. But Gordon is not the man to refute in self-defence. Only when the welfare of others is at stake does he come forward and brand the slanderer. Happily, an occasion arose in this connection which obliged him to unmask his Zebehr; and this he did in a Memoir of Zebehr, written by himself, that the people of the Soudan might know their ruler and his works. The document was never published, but the present

seems a fitting time for its production. The occasion of its composition was as follows :—

When Gordon, in 1876, took over the Governor-Generalship of the Soudan under Ismail, he soon discovered that, notwithstanding Zebehr's protestations of innocence at Cairo, the Black Pasha and his followers were opposing and misrepresenting him on all sides. He took little heed at first, but that the Soudanese, his subjects, might judge between him and the rebels, he wrote as I shall repeat.*

Zebehr and his followers, he begins, aware of the difficulties occasioned to the Egyptian Government by the war with Russia, with Abyssinia, and with the outlying province of Darfour, took advantage of the position, and strove to make themselves masters of the Soudan, representing the Government as possessed of other strength than that derived from the possession of artillery. All this was proved by their correspondence, and particularly by letters from Zebehr to his son and to his wife. "If anyone imagine," the Memoir goes on to say, "that these events are to be ascribed to the prohibition by the

* The Memoir referred to was dictated by Gordon and translated into Arabic by one of his officials. For the rendering of this document into English I am indebted to Mr. Henry C. Kay, than whom there is no finer Arabic scholar living. I would here acknowledge with gratitude his great kindness in undertaking this task for me, and the deep interest and care he has shown in its completion.

Governments of Turkey and Egypt of the slave-trade, the answer is that there is little foundation for such a belief, considering the injurious effects which the existence of the slave-trade occasioned to the generality of the people. But even if the prohibition had any part in promoting the rebellion, it is beyond doubt that the practice of kidnapping the families and children of negroes and of the inhabitants of the Bahr-Gazelle, and selling them into slavery, must be contrary to the will of God, and that no blessing can attend a country in which such deeds take place. It cannot be said, moreover, that any necessity existed for treating as enemies, attacking and enslaving a people who remained peacefully in their countries, engaged in procuring for themselves their means of sustenance. The existence of such a state of things would necessarily lead to the ruin of the whole of the Soudan. I am not influenced by any desire to injure Zebehr Pasha, but my object is simply to impart correct knowledge of the unhappy events that occurred, and which it has pleased God to bring to a termination."

After a brief account of Zebehr's origin the Memoir deals with his part in the conquest of Darfour. About the middle of the year 1285, when Dafir Pasha was charged with the Governorship of the Soudan, there came to him a native of

Darfour called Hafi Mahomed Belali. He stated that the Bahr-Gazelle and Hassalmahas (*i.e.*, the "country of the copper mines"?) were thickly inhabited, that most of the people were Moslems, and were possessed of considerable wealth. He professed a complete knowledge of the country as well as of the people, and declared that they did not acknowledge the authority of the Prince of Darfour. He also expressed a wish to conquer the country and subject it to the authority of the Khedivial Government; to conciliate the good will of the people; and to utilise its resources, especially its mineral wealth, for the benefit of Egypt. From inquiries addressed to the Sultan of Darfour, it seemed that the Hassalmahas belonged to him; and that Belali, who was one of his subjects, or slaves, had escaped the country. This and other information to a like effect being obtained by the Government, they were indisposed to adopt the course he recommended. Belali, however, was appointed Governor of the Bahr-Gazelle, and Mafrat el Mohar besides, and was provided with a sufficiency of soldiers, both regulars and Bashi-Bazouks, transports, money and military stores.

At that time Zebehr, anxious that Belali's demands should not be agreed to, and foreseeing that the presence of the Government in these districts

would affect his position and destroy his trade, came up to Khartoum. The steps he took to prevent an expedition failed, and he went with it. After its arrival, Kerchak Ali Agha, Commander of the Bashi-Bazouks, died; Zebehr then shewed his hand. He attacked the force, killed Belali and many of his men, and took possession of the arms and stores.

He gave out that Belali was the aggressor, and that his project was to take off the troops, and go filibustering in Darfour; and Dafir Pasha sent a person named Razi Ali Agha to investigate the matter. But Razi returned without any information, and meanwhile Dafir Pasha was recalled. The Governorship of the province was divided, and Ahmed Pasha Mumtaz arrived in the year 1288 as Governor of the Southern Soudan. He did nothing with the Bahr-Gazelle, and its affairs remained in abeyance until he was in his turn replaced by Ismail Pasha Ayoub. The new Governor took up the question with vigour, and Zebehr became alarmed. To divert the attention of the Government, he organised an expedition against the Razigat and Mu'alish Arabs of Shaka, subject to Darfour. He conquered their country and wrote to Ismail Ayoub that he had acted on behalf of the Government, and had made the con-

quest at his own expense and with his own men ; but he took care to conceal the fact that he had done it with Belali's arms and stores. In this way he not only obtained his pardon, but the rank of Kain-maker, and the despatch of reinforcements to Shaka. The Sultan of Darfour sent out an army and defeated him ; and he, without authority from the Government, and under pretence of acts of aggression committed by his new opponent, began raiding in the outlying districts of Darfour. This gained him the rank of Colonel, and a second reinforcement of regular troops. With these and his own men he then invaded Darfour itself. The Sultan was killed, the country subjugated ; and Zebehr once more boasted that he had accomplished the work with his own private means and by the aid of his own followers.

It is said that he took possession of all the Sultan's valuables and treasures, and kept his officers and soldiers in ignorance of the fact. Still, Ismail Ayoub made him a Pasha, and gave him the Governorship of Darfour. The Governor-General, however, soon saw that he was not to be trusted in this place, and made him Governor of Shaka and the Bahr-Gazelle instead. Zebehr, furious at this check, got permission to lay a complaint before the Khedive. In this he was a little too clever.

An investigation was held at Cairo, the result of which was unfavourable to the petitioner : so unfavourable indeed that, from fear of evil consequences upon his return to the Soudan, he was detained in the capital, where he has ever since remained.

At this time Gordon was appointed Governor-General of the Soudan and of the shores of the Red Sea. On his arrival at Khartoum, he sent orders to Suleiman, the son of Zebehr, then agent for his father at Shaka, to reinforce him in Darfour. Suleiman refused : he imagined that order could not be restored without him and his troops, and consequently his father would be allowed to return. But herein he was grossly deceived, for Gordon put down the revolt unaided, and Zebehr remained at Cairo. Then Suleiman determined, in conjunction with the Bazankars, his father's brethren and kinsmen, to march on Dara, attack and kill the garrison, and conquer the remainder of Darfour. He had upwards of 4,000 men and two guns. Gordon, who was then three days' journey from Dara, hastened to the scene of action. He sent for Suleiman and his followers, charged them with disobedience, and acquainted them with his knowledge of their designs. Eventually he deprived Suleiman of his appointment as Deputy-Governor

of Shaka; whereupon the young man's officers and soldiers abandoned him, and were given appointments and employment in Darfour. Taking into account the fact that Suleiman had been aided by these men in his disobedience, and influenced by other reasons of the moment, Gordon pardoned him in the name of the Khedive. He further appointed him to the Deputy-Governorship of the Bahr-Gazelle, received of him the oath of allegiance, informed him that all the ivory, his property, would be delivered up to him, deducting only the legal Government dues. He accordingly quitted Shaka, but no sooner had he taken possession of his new district than he began plundering and murdering, and inciting the inhabitants against the Government. Gordon at once summoned him to Khartoum, but he had lapsed into open rebellion, and Gessi was sent out to bring him to book. At this point in the Memoir, details are given of the revolt and of the twelve bloody battles in which it was put down; and thereafter the writer goes on to tell of the proofs he had collected of Suleiman's treason.*

"It is a notorious fact," he says, "known to all the inhabitants of the Soudan, that Zebehr Pasha ordered his son to rise in arms against the

* See Appendix 14.

Government. And it is well known, in particular, that before starting from Shaka on his journey to Cairo, Zebehr Pasha assembled the chiefs of his troops and his kinsmen beneath a tree on the road, and made them take oath that, in the event of his not returning, they would combine together in rebellion and armed resistance to the Government, and that they would obey his son in whatever he commanded them. Among the proofs (against Zebehr) is a letter found at the Dim after his son's escape thence." This letter was found in one of Suleiman's trunks. It is written to him by the hand of his father, whose seal it bears, and is of the date 11 : Janad al Awal, 1295. It orders him to drive away by force Idris Bey Abtar, who had been appointed Mudir of the Bahr-Gazelle, and after that to follow the instructions he had given him, taking possession of the district of Shaka and driving away its Governor, Said Bey.

Another letter from his cousin Ramli, informed the son of Zebehr that his father had sent him 1,000 oker of gunpowder, which, the writer said, he held at Suleiman's disposal, and respecting which he requested instructions. Many other letters from their kinsmen and friends proved agreement to rebel. Among them was one from a kinsman, in an assumed tone of learning and piety ;

it informed the son of Zebehr that he had three times tried his fortune, and each trial had shown him victorious; it predicted success to his undertaking. In addition to this, several employees testified to having been present under the tree. These letters were read before the Council at Khartoum, composed of military officers and chief members of the Government. With other evidence, they clearly proved that Zebehr and his son were traitors. For that crime, for their having levied war against the Government, and for the slaughter of its officers and soldiers at the Bahr-Gazelle, they were condemned to death; and those persons who were proved to have taken part with them were sentenced to banishment.

The son of Zebehr, in making his escape with what remained of his followers and troops, determined to join the traitor Haroun, the self-styled Sultan of Darfour,* who was then engaged in rebellious opposition to the Government in the district of Mount Marah. They set out on the road leading to that place, and they had reached Dar Kaza, the country of the Toashiah Arabs, when the news of their movements reached Gordon. He was then in the district of Toashia, waiting for Gessi

* Haroun was one of the most formidable enemies with whom General Gordon had to deal when he went up to Darfour in 1877.

Pasha. On Gessi's arrival, and on receiving confirmation of Suleiman's presence in the country of the Toashiahs, he ordered his valiant lieutenant to reinforce his 600 men from the Bahr-Gazelle, with three companies of Soudani troops, to be taken from the Mudirieb of Dara; to set out in pursuit of the rebel; and to destroy Suleiman and his followers before they could enter Darfour and unite themselves with Haroun. Gessi accordingly proceeded to Dara, and on the 4th July he marched thence to Al Kalkaleh with 300 men. He had previously requisitioned 600 men at Shaka, where he had left them with orders to join him on the march. They were slow to come, and Gessi heard meanwhile that the son of Zebehr, who was only three days' journey from Kalkalah, was likely to receive reinforcements. He accordingly started with his three hundred. The son of Zebehr remained at Toashia, exchanging provisions with the Arabs for slaves. At Gessi's approach he prepared for flight. But a dispute broke out between him and his followers: Râbih Agha (who wished to seek refuge in Darbanda near Barku, and whose opinions were opposed by Soliman-Râbih Agha) fled with 700 men by one road, and the rebel Abu'l Kasim escaped with 400 men by another. Those who remained were Mûsa, the son of Al Haff; Al Arbab, son of Diab; Yakub, Hasan Sakîl, and

Ibrahim, the brothers of Sa 'id Bey Hason ; Suleïman, son of Rahmah ; Bu Bekr, son of Mansur ; Birigi Ahmad, son of Idris ; and Abd el Kâdir, son of the Imar. Along with these Suleïman had 600 Bazankars, and 300 slave dealers (*jallabs*). They set off with Gessi at their heels for Mount Marah ; and on the evening of the 16th July, 1879, their pursuer came up with them, unperceived. The troops halted for the night, and at day-break they surprised the sleeping camp. All the men I have named were captured. Many of the Bazankars and *jallabs* (slave-dealers) escaped. Of those that remained, some were sent, after investigation, to their homes, whilst such *jallabs* who were found guilty were sent to Dara. Suleïman and his principals, the heroes of my list, were put to death. It is said that none of them I have named showed any fear of death, excepting the son of Zebehr alone, who did not conceal his feelings, as is the custom of the people of the Soudan. It is also said that the rebels imagined Gessi's force to be at least 3,000 strong, and that when they were undeceived they deeply lamented their folly and their fate.

“ As to the rebel known under the name of Abu'l Kâsim, who fled as before mentioned, according to intelligence received, he also was arrested, and has most probably been put to death. And no rebels

remained in these regions of whom anything is to be feared, since the destruction of the force described above, and since its desertion by Rabiḥ."

"Such," says Gordon, "is the retribution to him who is ungrateful for the favours he has received from God, and for the benefits conferred by those in authority over him. And we pray unto God (be He magnified and exalted!) that He may ever grant victory to the Khedivial government, and that He may extinguish and exterminate all its enemies by the hands of its servants filled with determination in the execution of their duty. And, verily, He is the possessor of infinite power over all things!"

The next paper is the Report of Yusuf Pasha Hasan, giving an account of his operations for the suppression of the insurrection in the Bahr-Gazelle country. It begins with an introduction in the usual strain. Most of it has been borrowed by the compiler of the Governor-General's narrative. Yusuf Pasha then proceeds to say that he was appointed to re-establish order in the Provinces of the Bahr-Gazelle, by "His Excellency the exalted Governor-General of the Soudan, Gordon Pasha, whom God hath made an ornament to the age and to the kingdom, who by his uprightness hath stopped the flowing of tears, and by his impetuous bravery hath destroyed the paths of the wicked." He

arrived at the "Dim" of Idris Abtar Bey, the seat of the Government of the Province, on the 23 Zul Kadah, 1295. The rebel Suleiman advanced against the expedition "with his numerous army," and there occurred twelve "battles," which the good Pasha gives us in detail.

Then follows Hasan Pasha's account of the twelve "battles," which has been incorporated, word for word, in the Governor-General's narrative. After relating the final flight of Suleiman, Hasan Pasha says that he sent 2,000 men in pursuit with the instructions transmitted to him by His Excellency the Governor, and ordered them not to return without having fulfilled their object. "And down to the present time," he adds, "I have no news of them." His report is dated 9 Cha'bar, 1296.

The next paper contains the official report of the proceedings of the Maylis (Court of Enquiry in Court Martial). It begins by stating that the papers framed by the written orders of the Governor-General directed to the Commander-in-Chief, dated 1st Sha'ban, 1296, show that Zebehr Pasha, before his departure from Shaka, assembled the chiefs of the Bazenkars, his kinsmen and servants, and his son Suleiman, beneath a tree at the encampment of Shiekh Ahmad, or Dudan or Ruran, Dudaf, inspector (nazir) of the Arabs of Al Mu'alich, and made them

swear on the Kur-an that, if he did not return from Cairo, they would combine together to refuse obedience to the Government, and strictly obey the orders of his son Suleiman. These facts are proved by the depositions of certain persons, who witnessed the proceedings: namely, Masri Effendi, Abd al Kadir, Deputy-Governor of Shaka, Ahmad el Kidr, Ma'awin Al Kalkelah, and Muhommad Ayha, or Ban Bareb Al Naka (?) Ma'awin of the Mudirich. And inasmuch as Said Bey al Huseyn, formerly Governor of Shaka, was present at the meeting, and is now at Khartoum, he was brought before the Magylis and examined, and he confirmed the truth of the preceding statement.

A letter was also read from Zebehr to his son Suleiman, inciting him to rebel, and to levy war against the Government; urging him to expel by force of arms Idris Bey Abtar, Governor of the Bahr-Gazelle; and desiring him also to send the means of combining with 'Awad Bey for the sake of his assistance in seizing the country, seeing that he is one of its old inhabitants, and is well acquainted with all its affairs, and with the language of the people. The letter goes on to say that, whereas the agents whom Zebehr had left in charge of his Zaribehs, had left their employment, and had taken service under the Government, he therefore desired his son to

receive (or *take*) possession of the Zaribehs and their contents, and to receive (or *take*) possession of Shaka from Said, at Huseyn ; and that, if the Government should remove Suleiman from his post, a person it approved of would be appointed.

Also a letter was read from Ramli, son of Suleiman, to Suleiman, son of Zebehr, acknowledging the receipt of 1,000 okes of gunpowder from the Black Pasha, asking for instructions, and stating that it was meanwhile hidden underground.

Also a telegram from Zebehr, at Cairo, to 'Awad (at Khartoum), inquiring after his son Suleiman, his loyalty to the Government, and respecting the state of the crops.

Also a telegram from Awad to Zebehr Pasha, referring in comforting terms to Ramli Suleiman and to the favourable condition of the Nile, and adding that there was no news from Suleiman respecting the crops.

The "Mayli" investigated the acts of open rebellion committed by Suleiman, in plundering Government stores, levying war against the force under the command of Yusuff Pasha, Hasar and Gessi Pasha, and slaying the Government soldiers. Idin Bey being brought before the Council and interrogated, deposed that 240 regular soldiers had been killed, including one captain, four lieutenants, and 27

cadets; that Awad, as Said Agha, the Ma'awin, was killed; that 25 Remington rifles, 30 converted French rifles, and two guns, with their ammunition wagons, had been looted by the rebels, in addition to the aforesaid seizure of the ammunition confided to Awad as Lezziid Agha. Also that 24 irregular soldiers had been killed, with 330 Arab *jallabs* (merchants), and 12 men of his own people.

The Court judged that Zebehr Pasha had been found guilty of rebellion, that he had encouraged and urged his son to resist the authority of the Government, with a view to taking possession of the country; and that he had supplied him with gunpowder for that purpose; by which act he had rendered himself liable to the penalty of death, and to the confiscation of his estate. As to Suleiman, the son of Zebehr, the Court (after recapitulating his offences) pronounced him to be beyond the reach of pardon, and sentenced him and his confederates to death and to the forfeiture of all their possessions.

And seeing that Elyas Pasha and Mahomed Bey Hadgi Ahmad, who were related by marriage to Zebehr Pasha, had aided and abetted him and his son in their rebellion, and in the plunder of Government stores—as was proved by documents and by letters from Zebehr appointing Mahomed Bey

Hadgi Ahmad his agent, and by telegrams despatched to him—the Court approved of their banishment to the districts of Harar and Zeyla, after the property in their possession belonging to the Government and to Zebehr Pasha should have been recovered from them. And that all persons who should be found guilty of aiding Zebehr and his son in their rebellion should suffer the same penalty.

All this in conformity with the fifth and sixth sections of the 1st division of the Hamayuni Code, and articles 357, 362, and 379 of the Civil Code, &c., &c. Dated 3 Sha'ban, 1296.

The next paper contains copies of documents, namely : 1st.—Copy of a letter from Ramli, son of Suleiman, to Suleiman, son of Zebehr Pasha, dated 4 : Muharram, 1294. The writer addresses his correspondent in the regular official style in use in Government departments in Egypt, as “Mudir (Governor) of the Bahr El Ghazal and Rûl,” and gives him the title of *Bey*.

After the usual compliments, he begins by telling him that he need be under no uneasiness about his father; that, with God's leave, the latter will soon come; that no one, either Turk or native, stands so high in the favour of the Viceroy, by reason of the assistance he has given in the war with Russia; that

he (Zebehr) had written to Khartoum, desiring one of the best houses to be prepared, for that he knew he would soon return. "And then, be cautious; and again, be cautious. Do not believe the words of enemies." He goes on to say that Zebehr has sent a number of stores of considerable value, among them 1,000 okes of gunpowder and lead, and many weapons of war, that these have arrived at the White Nile; that the people were much alarmed, and when they heard of Suleiman's departure for the "Dems" they wished to sell the powder; that Ramé had prevented them from doing so, and had caused the powder and lead to be buried; that he awaited Suleiman's instructions; that he had, moreover, a small quantity of powder at Khartoum, and that if Suleiman required it he should let him know.

The letter ends with the following P.S. :—"We know from both high and low that your kingdom depends entirely upon Abu 'l Kasim. Persons of low degree have come to us, and have informed us that they have escaped from him. The ruin of your dominion is (or will be) caused by Abu 'l Kasim. It ought not to be so, and this is the hope we entertain for you"—meaning, it is presumed, that the writer hopes Suleiman will be able to overcome the danger of which he is hereby warned.

2nd.—A long letter from Zebehr to his son

Suleiman, dated 11 : Jamar Awal, 1295. This is the document of which a *resumé* is given on a preceding page. It is written in a rambling and disconnected style, and the writer often repeats himself. It will suffice to make the following additions to the abstracts already given :—

Zebehr addresses his son in the Muslim manner in terms of strong affection, and styles him his appointed heir and successor. He gives him much good advice, religious and moral, and desires him to be just and upright towards those over whom he has authority. He again and again inculcates obedience to the Government, adding in one place, “with extreme caution for your own safety (or interests).” He denounces Idris Abtar for his ingratitude and intrigues, and requests his son to expel him the country—him and all his kin. Idris, he says, is wicked, and God loveth not the wicked, neither doth the Khedivial Government love any but them who practice justice among its subjects. Idris and his people are full of envy and jealousy.

He desires his son to guard and preserve the country, and to protect the subjects of the Government; to prohibit all proceedings in their prejudice, the plundering of their goods or the kidnapping of their children, seeing that they have now become

Moslems, and must be held in honour as subjects of the Khedivial Government.

As to himself, he says he is trusted with great honours by the Khedive, who is assured of his fidelity and loyalty. He goes on to say : " Do not leave my slaves in the possession of the treacherous (Government) servants, least of all those who are with Said Bey. Receive (or take) them from him, and if it be expedient, receive (or take) Shaka and make over its administration to the Government, for Said, without doubt, will ruin it, as he ruins all places." He then mentions Awad's daughter; exhorts him to be particular in treating her with kindness, and to show her greater favour than to any other of his women; to regard Awad as his father, and to remember that without his assistance he cannot gain possession of the country : reminding him that when they parted he urged him to gain Awad's confidence, to refer all things to him, and to consider him as his father. " But you have disobeyed us, and your dominion has been ruined owing to the absence of Awad, but next to the Faith, God has instituted forgiveness, and from report of what you have done I have pardoned, and so likewise has Awad. But find means to bring him and yourself together."

Next he desires his son to send him 30 bundles of

ostrich feathers (best quality) along with the money that is to be remitted—not later than 1 : Shawal—elephant's tusks, as specified ; and other goods, including arms for purposes of defence deposited on the Seribas. Seeing that the agents who were in charge of these things have left their posts and taken service under the Government, the whole of the goods in question are to be taken over in accordance with the monitories existing in the books. He ends his letter thus : “ What I have said is sufficient. He who is present perceives though the absent cannot see. It is for you to act.”

3rd.—Copies of telegram from Zebehr to Awad, and from Awad to Zebehr : the former dated 11th March, '79 (European date), the latter without date.

4th.—Deposition of Masci Awad Abd al Kadir, Deputy-Governor of Shaka (and others), describing the meeting held by Zebehr under a tree, which, they say, was attended by 33 persons.

5th.—Copy of a letter from Zebehr to Mahommed Bey Haggi Ahmad, dated 9 Safer, 1293, written after the Black Pasha had started for Cairo, empowering Mahommed Bey to name certain sums of money, and to give receipts for them, and requesting him to forward the money to head-quarters.

The next and last paper is the deposition made by Sa'ad esh Shami, Corporal of Artillery.

He says that the party to which he belonged was attacked by Suleiman, the son of Zebehr, at the head of 9,000 Bazinkars, at the Dem of Idris Abtar. Suleiman was accompanied by the chiefs under his command (whose names he gives). "We numbered 600 rifles, and we had two guns." Severe fighting ensued, whereupon the Dongolawis and negroes fled, leaving the artillerymen to bear the burden of the fight. They defended themselves with their two guns until their ammunition was exhausted. Then Suleiman and his troops bore down upon them, killed some, and made prisoners of the others. After sending out a detachment, who captured the ammunition in charge of Idris Abtar, Suleiman ordered the prisoners before him, and compelled them, under pain of death, to promise they would fight for him. When the Government troops arrived, under the command of Gessi and Yusef Bey ash Shalali, Suleiman went forth and attacked them, and was defeated. He fortified himself (as previously described), and fighting went on for some months. The artillerymen pretended to fight, but took care that their guns should do no harm, and did not open (unscrew ?) the shells. At length Suleiman evacuated his position with what remained of his forces. He carried off the guns ; and the artillerymen, bound with ropes, were

dragged after them. They reached Suleiman's great Dem, and fortified themselves therein. The Government troops soon afterwards arrived, and likewise entrenched themselves. Two days before any actual fighting commenced, the corporal succeeded in making his escape by night. He had an iron chain fastened to his neck. He wandered for 19 days in the forest, and at length reached the settlement of the Toashia (Arabs). One of these, a man named Al Ghazala, relieved him of his chain, mounted him, and bore him company to Dara. The narrator makes no mention of the story of the deliberate and open sacrifice of a boy.

After such a revelation as this, it is not easy to see how such a man as Zebehr could have been entrusted by a cabinet of amateurs and doctrinaires with the task of establishing and maintaining order in the Soudan. From Gordon's point of view, however, the plan was not only possible, but eminently appropriate and judicious. As he was the last to condone any of the acts with which Zebehr stood charged, he was the last to admit his unfitness on their account. The proposal that Zebehr should be his successor was one of those daring strokes of policy which made his tactics unlike those of other men. They were generated by the difficulties of his position, and scarce ever had he found them fail. It

must not be imagined that his most startling devices were conceived rashly or rashly carried out; they were invariably the result of deep, but rapid reasoning, and of an unerring knowledge of both the peoples and the countries he was summoned to succour and to guide. He has been called a leader of men. He was more; he was a leader of events.

A great deal of his success consisted in the fact that he was always a generous and straightforward foe. As the Master whom he served first struck down His enemy Saul, and then converted him into His faithful servant Paul, so Gordon struck down his enemies, and used them as allies after changing them into friends. In this way he was wont to achieve prodigious results, though there were instances of failure now and then. In this spirit he would willingly have shaken hands with Zebehr, the notorious ravager and ruiner of countries. He had destroyed his power as a slave-hunter, and the power of those who helped him: he now urged that the employment of such power as he still possessed should be directed into a new channel. His theory was, that where courage, energy, and a talent for organisation and administration showed themselves in raids and devastating wars they should now have a chance of shining in use, in the work of restoring peace and

plenty to a ruined land. The result of this endeavour might have been a failure, it is true ; but even then the condition of things could hardly have been made worse ; on the other hand, the result might have been a success, and the addition of one triumph more to the Christian practice of making your foe your friend. The argument was this : Zebehr had treated others ill, but he had himself been ill-treated in return. If he could now be used for good, the past should be buried in the present. In a position from which he could see happiness where he only saw misery, and hear blessings where he had heard only cursings, he might realise how necessary it was that the old unholy power should have been crushed. An honest man in the East is rarely understood, but he is always respected, and, what is more, often appreciated. An idiot, though rarely an object of appreciation, is also an object of reverence, for reverence is given in the East to all that is mysterious, and the ways of an honest man are as hard to comprehend as the vagaries of a fool. Zebehr would never make an honest Governor-General of the Soudan, in the Western acceptation of the word. He would never tell the truth, for the truth is not in him ; and he would always take bribes, and extort them if they were not offered. Lies and bribes are national attributes, and a

native Governor-General who did without them would be regarded as a fool. But Zebehr, notwithstanding all this, might prove an abler and more useful ruler of the Soudan than, with one exception, the Soudan has yet known, for he knows the people whom he would be called upon to govern, and by them he is known and feared. They require to be governed courageously, and Zebehr has courage; they also require to be governed by kindness, and Zebehr can be made kind. The question was really one of expediency; and virtue in this case must be bought with pounds, shillings, and pence, if it could not be obtained by less ignoble means.

No one was capable of deciding who should govern the Soudan as Gordon; and he, with all his knowledge of the past, and all his grasp of the future, decided that Zebehr would be the nearest possible approach to the right man in the right place. It is not for us to criticise his judgment or pick holes in the reasoning by which he was established in his mind. It commended itself neither to H.M. Government nor to H.M. Opposition; and we know the result.

CHAPTER VIII.

ENGLAND'S POLICY.

THE policy of H.M. Government in connection with Gordon, Zebehr, and the despatch of troops has had every possible epithet of abuse heaped upon it from the English and the foreign Press, and from the English and foreign public. Sometimes a redundancy of epithets has been applied, and then the term "vacillating" is almost inevitable. Why such a word should be used is not quite evident, for as a matter of fact the policy of H.M. Government in Egypt has been unfortunately only too consistent.

When Turkey declined to interfere with the Arabi scandal, England stepped in to protect her own interests, and expressed her intention of retaining her foothold in the country, and assisting in its government as long as she considered it necessary to do so for her own sake. She entered upon no engagement to protect Egypt's dependencies or the Sultan's possessions, unless such protection involved a duty she owed to her own subjects and her own

commercial interests. When the revolt in the Soudan assumed heroic proportions, and there was a popular clamour that England should repress it, her reply was a simple repetition of her avowed policy. "We have nothing to do," she said, "with the Soudan, which at present does not concern us. If it ever does—that is, if the revolt extends to Egypt proper, where we have interests—we shall be prepared to deal with it (for we do not now intend to reduce the strength of our standing army in the country); but until it does, the owners of the Soudan must settle their difficulty in their own way, and rely wholly on their own resources." Whether this policy was good or bad is too complicated a question to be discussed here, but it was at least consistent and definite, the exact antithesis of what it has been called. On this theory our efforts for the relief of Sinkat and Tokar were simple acts of kindness, not admissions of responsibility: the Egyptians failed, and we lent them a helping hand. Our defence of Suakim was arranged on a different basis, for there we had commercial and political interests at stake. We raised no objection to the plan of making application to the Porte for troops, and stipulated that the Porte should pay all the cost and make use of Suakim as a base; and there were sufficient poli-

tical reasons for these two conditions. When it became evident that Egypt was unable to reconquer the Soudan, we suggested she had better let it be, and content herself with trying to manage her own affairs; and this was not advice, but a simple recognition of the fact that it was Hobson's choice for her—that or nothing. The Khedive accepted the position, but his ministry resigned, and their reasons for doing so were more Irish than Oriental: they declared, through their President, Cherif Pasha, that they would rather resign their posts than surrender what had already been taken from them.

As matters became more serious it was evident that in abandoning the Soudan the Egyptian Government would have to abandon such garrisons as were still loyal. In this dilemma we offered them assistance: we were prepared to relieve the garrisons, but there our action would cease; we would have nothing to do with any attempt to reconquer the country, nor would we assist in any endeavour to reconstitute its government which involved our support, whether moral or real. All this was consistent with our declared policy of helping the Government of Egypt and her people in so far as concerned what we believed to be our interests. The loyal garrisons in the Soudan

appealed to their Government for relief, and their Government could not give it, and we answered the appeal in the cause of humanity. Of course it was advanced that in the cause of humanity we should have undertaken the reconquest of the Soudan and the establishment of a just and active government; but, said the Gladstone Ministry, it might as reasonably be advanced that we should expend our men and money in quelling any other rebellion—that we should constitute ourselves, in fact, the police of the human race. If our national philanthropy were allowed to run riot in this way, we should soon ourselves be entirely dependent on the philanthropy of other nations.

Having decided to attempt the evacuation of the loyal garrisons, the next point was the best way in which it could be done, and this was no easy problem. Many minds attempted its solution, but their schemes involved either the retention of part of the Soudan or the subjection of the Mahdi and the constitution of a government from without. To one and all H.M. Ministers returned the same answer: "Our object is to relieve the loyal garrisons only, and not to settle the future of the Soudan. We will undertake so much, at any reasonable risk, but we will do no more." Gordon, who at first was strongly in favour of the re-

tention of the Soudan, east of the White Nile and north of Sennaar, at last undertook to attempt the evacuation of the country on these principles, but it was understood that H.M. Government should give him their support and consideration should he be unable to fulfil all their expectations. What he said was tantamount to this, "I will do what you want if I can. But it may be impossible: I may find that I cannot relieve these garrisons without destroying the power of the Mahdi first; and if so, I must look to you to enable me to do it." To this the Government agreed with enthusiasm. He had all their confidence, and all their capacity of help was his likewise. And he went upon his errand on this definite and particular understanding: that his only objects were the safe evacuation of Egyptian troops and employees, and the restoration of their independence to the Soudanese apart from any outside government.

An important consideration, associated with, but not dependent upon Gordon's instructions, was the stimulus which might be given to the slave-trade by the withdrawal of the Egyptian authority from the interior. H.M. Government therefore directed their Envoy to pay special attention to steps which might be useful in counteracting this stimulus. Up to this time the policy was accepted by the Khedive,

Nubar Pasha, and Sir Evelyn Baring as the best one possible; and Gordon himself declared that "to secure a good government to the Soudanese was impracticable at any cost." "Her Majesty's Government would, therefore, after evacuating the Egyptian garrisons, etc., leave the people as God placed them, not forced to fight among themselves, and no longer oppressed by men coming from lands so remote as Circassia, Kurdistan, and Anatolia." It has therefore to be admitted that at starting he accepted the morality of his mission, and believed his task at its inception fully practicable.

This is a conscientious, unbiased review of the action of H.M. Government from the end of the Arabi rebellion to the departure of Gordon for the Soudan, and is the first period of the so-called vacillating policy of England. The second period extends from Gordon's arrival in Egypt to the time when Khartoum was entirely cut off from the rest of the Soudan, and therefore from all possible communication with Egypt and England.

Now when Gordon drew up his memorandum on board the ss. "Tanjore," he laid out a scheme of action which appeared to him feasible, but by no means certain of success, and Lieut.-Colonel Stewart, in endorsing the greater part of it, wisely said that, as it was impossible for H.M. Govern-

ment to foresee all the contingencies which might arise during the process of evacuation, the more judicious course would be to rely on General Gordon's discretion and on his knowledge of the country and the people. Mr. Gladstone admitted this at once: the Government, he said, were resolved to do nothing which should interfere with the plan of pacification—the only one which promised a solution of the Soudan difficulty; and it was the duty of the Government to beware of interfering with their servant's plans. These, it should be remembered, involved the possibility of "Soudanese Conservatives of property fighting against the Soudanese Communists who might desire to rob them." While he was journeying to Khartoum Gordon asked the Government, in a telegram dated Abu Hamed, February 8th, 1884, to change the firman with which he was provided into one recognizing moral control and suzerainty, and gave his reasons very clearly for the suggestion. The Government, however, did not agree to any change of the firman. Before he reached Khartoum they telegraphed to ask whether it would assist him in the policy of withdrawal to send a British force to Suakim, to operate, if necessary, in its vicinity; and his reply to this was that he would care more for *rumour* of intention to send forces than for anything

else : he considered that rumour of English intervention would have great effect. Later on he sent another telegram, stating that the question of "getting out the garrison and families was so interlaced with the preservation of the well-to-do people of the country as to be *for the present* inseparable, and that therefore any precipitate action separating these interests would throw all well-disposed people into the ranks of the enemy." The natural reply on the part of the Government to this was, that Gordon would of course take his own time. It may be thought that this telegram of Gordon's sounded the first note of alarm ; but it should be read with two which preceded it : one dated from Abu Hamed on February 8th, the other from Berber on February 11th. The first said, "I beg you not to have the slightest anxiety about the Soudan. I trust security will be secured in a month." The second ran thus : "I understand your desire to be the pacification of the country without bloodshed, and the formation of a native Government. I will fulfil your orders, and feel sure I am not presumptuous in assuring you I have every hope of success."

The first radical change of programme was suggested in a telegram dated Khartoum, February 18th. Having alluded to the time when whites, fellaheen troops, civilian employees, soldiers' widows

and orphans—in short, the Egyptian contingent in the Soudan — would be removed, Gordon went on to say that H.M. Government would then be face to face with the question of administration, and that unless he had a successor there would be anarchy throughout the country, which, though all the Egyptian element was withdrawn, would be “a misfortune and inhuman.” He therefore suggested that Zebehr should be appointed his successor, created a K.C.M.G., and promised the moral support of H.M. Government. This telegram burst upon the Government like a shell : it involved a complete change of policy, and therewithal the necessity of admitting themselves, not centres of prophetic inspiration, but average human beings. Of course, too, it appealed irresistibly to their habit of procrastination, and was read as a suggestion for the future, not as a requirement for the present. The answer was decisive. The Government said that the gravest objections existed to the appointment by their authority of a successor to General Gordon, and that no necessity appeared to have arisen of going beyond the suggestions contained in Gordon’s memo. of the 22nd ult., and making any special provision for the government of the country.

On Feb. 27th two satisfactory telegrams from the

Soudan arrived at Cairo. The first, from Mr. Power, stated that the Mahdi had no standing army; that the town of Khartoum was peaceful and its market full; and that Gordon was working wonders. The second, from Gordon, announced that Sennaar had reported itself quite safe, but that there was a gang of rebels on the road between that city and Khartoum. But on the same day there came in the proclamation which Gordon had issued to the inhabitants of the Soudan; it was mysterious and somewhat perplexing. It set forth that, having in vain advised the people to abstain from rebellion, Gordon had been compelled to resort to severe measures; so that British troops were on their way, and would reach Khartoum in a few days, when whosoever persisted in wickedness would be treated as he deserved. Explanation of this is impossible. It may be that Gordon was working out his original notion of a phantasmagoria of British intervention; or, what is more likely, events at Suakim had given rise to serious rumours at Khartoum, and Gordon had been informed that a British force was really on its way to Berber. Be this at it may, it is evident that by this time he had recognized that his work was hardly to be done by him single-handed, and that the policy of evacuation, pure and simple, was not one that he, a Christian

soldier, could countenance or maintain. Daily the breach was widening ; daily the change of front was made more and more apparent.

In a telegram dated the 24th of February, Gordon said it was quite possible that in a short time the whole Soudan, comprising Dongola, Berber, Khartoum, Sennaar, and Kassala, would be quieted, and Bogos evacuated ; and he then went on to discuss the future of the ill-fated country. To the telegram rejecting his scheme for the future, he replied that he knew his duty was to evacuate the garrison, and do the best he could for the establishment of a peaceful government ; the first he hoped to accomplish, but the second was more difficult, and concerned Egypt more than himself. It practically amounted to "smashing up the Mahdi," and if the Government decided to do this, he recommended the despatch of 200 Indian troops to Wady Halfa and an officer to Dongola, under pretence of looking out for quarters for troops. He ended by repeating that evacuation was possible, but that the effect would be felt in Egypt ; and that for the protection of Egypt H.M. Government would be forced to enter into a far more serious business than the immediate smashing up of the Mahdi. This was excellent advice, but it did not commend itself to H.M. Ministers. They still remained consistent,

still adhered to their old programme. They wanted evacuation, and evacuation only. The country was to be given up to its own, to do as they would with it. They did not intend to smash the Mahdi in the Soudan, but they would be prepared to do so if he came into Egypt proper, and threatened existing British interests. And still the public and Press cried out upon them, and swore their vacillating policy was making England ridiculous in the eyes of the whole world! They were right enough as to the effect, but wrong as to the cause. Our Ministers were ridiculous not in their indecision but their obstinacy.

On Feb. 27th the whole condition of affairs was altered, and from this date H.M. Government were placed in a totally different position as regards facts. Gordon telegraphed : "To-day and daily go down all sick, widows, orphans, etc., and there remain 1,400 fellaheen soldiers. Supposing I send down all these fellaheen soldiers, in a few days the town would send to the Mahdi its submission, and all the machinery of the Government would be caught. *The evacuation of the Soudan is impossible* until the Government asserts its authority, and I mean by evacuation the removal of all Egyptian employees who form the machinery of the Government, and not the departure of sick, etc., who may be con-

sidered to have gone from here. You will have to say if this partial evacuation fulfils your desires." In another telegram, dated March 8th, but received with the first, he firmly maintained the policy of eventual evacuation, but insisted that it was impossible to get the Cairene employees out of Khartoum unless the Government (having refused him Zebehr) sent British and Indian Moslem troops to Wady Halfa. He admitted the possibility of holding out in Khartoum and of forcing back the revolt, but declared that there was no chance of the position improving with time, that the money at his disposal must come to an end, and that anarchy would inevitably follow.

His next telegram, dated Feb. 29th, threw no new light upon the situation, beyond the statement that, owing to Baker's defeat, Kassala had been attacked by the Hadendowas. Three days after this he telegraphed again, maintaining the policy of eventual evacuation, declaring the *immediate* withdrawal of the Egyptian employees to be impossible, urging fresh reasons for the appointment of Zebehr, and for the despatch of 200 British troops to Wady Halfa. Next day he went still farther, and wrote thus: "The combination of Zebehr and myself at Khartoum is *an absolute necessity for success.*" A telegram, dated March 4th, related that things

were not serious, though they might become so if there were any delay in sending Zebehr. "My weakness," he added, significantly enough, "is that of being foreign, and Christian, and peaceful; and it is only by sending Zebehr that prejudice can be removed." Colonel Stewart, on the same day, endorsed these views in the strongest terms: it was *impossible* he said *to quit the country* without leaving some sort of established government, and unless Zebehr was sent there *was little probability* of the policy of evacuation being carried out.

Now, in considering the action of H.M. Government, all these telegrams should be read together. They are weighty, but not very alarming, and to a certain extent they are contradictory. The new position was a revelation and a surprise to H.M. Ministers. Previously they had only been recommended to send Zebehr or to send troops, that the country might have a just and settled government, and not because they were absolutely necessary for the evacuation of the garrisons. Under these circumstances, a pause for reflection and a desire for further information were natural enough; and our rulers can hardly be blamed for their indulgence therein. Had they been capable of a new departure, of recognizing the logic of events and preferring expediency to consistency, had they

in a word been statesmen, the difficulty had been overcome with ease, and Gordon still living.

Unhappily, they would neither see nor hear, neither listen nor invent. Lord Granville's reply was to this effect: That H.M. Government saw no reason to change their impressions about Zebehr, which were formed on various grounds, among others on Gordon's memorandum written on board the "Tanjore;" that unless those impressions were removed, they could not take upon themselves the responsibility of sending him; and that they would like to know how it was possible to reconcile such an appointment with the prevention or discouragement of slave-hunting and the slave-trade, with the policy of complete evacuation, and with security to Egypt. They also desired a detailed account of the progress which had been made in evacuating the garrisons, and requested to know the length of time likely to elapse before the whole or greater part could be withdrawn. Gordon's reply was a masterpiece of statecraft. He proved that the dispatch of Zebehr meant the extrication of the Cairene employees from Khartoum and the garrisons from Sennaar and Kassala; that no other means of achieving these things was possible; that as to slave-holding, even if we held the Soudan we could not interfere with it, the Treaty of 1877

being impracticable; that as to slave-hunting, the evacuation of the Bahr-Gazelle and Equatorial Provinces would entirely end it. He related what had been done, and explained the positions held by the rebels. He declared his efforts to divide the country among the native chiefs or kings to have failed: the chiefs would not collect; they knew they could not hold the country a day against the Mahdi's agents. He showed that Zebehr could do this: the Mahdi might be the Pope, but Zebehr would be the Sultan; and he admitted that Zebehr had probably stirred up the revolt in hopes he might be sent to quell it. "It is the irony of fate that he will get his wish if he is sent up." Now the whole slave question was really one which required no discussion nor consideration at all; if we determined to abandon the country we had to accept the inevitable consequences of our policy. That this fact is one that might well have commended itself to H.M. Government, corrupt with sentimentalism and high principle as they were, is possible, though far from probable. What is certain is that some pressure was put upon them from without, and that they decided to stick to their colours.

Scarcely were they in possession of Gordon's telegram when they received a petition, signed by the Chairman of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery

Society, protesting in strong terms* against Zebehr's employment. Now if this petition had anything to do with deciding the Government not to send Zebehr—and, as appeared by the sequel, practically to sign their Envoy's death warrant—it is a pity that the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society ever existed. Looking only at the immediate issues, it is extremely silly and improvident. Anarchy in the Soudan meant slave-hunting in the Soudan, whatever happened in the Bahr-Gazelle and Equatorial Provinces; and the best authority in the world showed that anarchy could only be prevented by Zebehr. The Anti-Slavery Society therefore did their very best to stultify the proposed object of their existence. They prevailed, however, and at once. The reply returned by H.M. Government on March 11th was consistent even to puzzle-headedness. They did not consider their arguments against the employment of Zebehr satisfactorily answered. They were, however, prepared to agree to any other Mohommedan assistance, and to supply any reasonable sum Gordon considered necessary for the achievement of his mission. They were not prepared to send troops to Berber. Finally, they had no desire to force the hand of their Envoy

* See Appendix 15.

prematurely, and, therefore, would extend his appointment for any reasonable period. This was, of course, a vote of want of confidence. It really signified, "You have already had to change your mind more than once; stay a little longer, and see if you may not change it again."

We now come to a series of telegrams, dated March 8th. These stated that the Mahdi had raised the tribes, who would try and cut the road to Berber, and who would also cut the telegraph and prevent supplies from reaching Khartoum; they also mentioned that Khartoum had provisions for six months. On March 9 another series of telegrams were sent, dated at different hours of the day, and these were most disturbing. Gordon announced that there was no possibility of the people rallying round him, or of paying any heed to his proclamation; that unless troops were sent to Berber, and Zebehr to the Soudan, it was not worth while holding on to Khartoum; that he could get the Khartoum garrison to Berber, but that such action would sacrifice all outlying places except Berber and Dongola; that once the Mahdi was in Khartoum, operations against him would be very arduous and would not save Sennaar and Kassala; *that it would be possible to retire all Cairene employees and white troops with Stewart from Berber to Dongola and*

thence to Wady Halfa; but that if the evacuation of Khartoum was decided upon, he would ask H.M. Government to accept the resignation of his commission, when he would take all his steamers and stores up to the Equatorial and Bahr-Gazelle provinces, and consider those provinces under the King of the Belgians, from whom he had written authority to that effect. He requested a speedy reply, as in a few days even the retreat to Berber might be impossible.

Next day, March 10th, another telegram reported that the recent exodus,* including the invalids and widows, had failed to satisfy the wavering tribes between Khartoum and Berber; that had he been able to give hopes of a future establishment things might have been better; but that it was now evident no one would throw in his fortunes with a departing Government. At a later hour of the same day he says, "It is hardly worth while giving you all the rumours here. Through the weakness of the Government many have joined the rebels. All news confirms what I have already told you, viz., that before long we shall be blockaded. The utility of Zebehr is greatly diminished owing to our weakness, which has forced the loyal to join the enemy." On March the 11th came the

* See Appendix 16.

announcement that the rebels were four hours distant on the Blue Nile, but that there was no panic; and on the same day Sir E. Baring received this startling communication: "Khartoum, March 11th, '84. I would like to express to you and H.M. Government my sincere thanks for the support you have both afforded me since I took up this mission, and to acknowledge that you have both given me every assistance I could have expected. It is not in our hands to command success. I say the same for the Khedive and Egyptian Ministers." Of course the telegram sent by H.M. Government on March 11th had not yet been received. It is therefore to be feared that the irony of Gordon's message was only prophetic.

Between March the 10th and April the 9th Gordon received only one of H.M. Government's many telegrams: that which told him not to expect any British advance from Souakim to Berber. They, on the other hand, received nearly all his telegrams between those dates, and it is with these that we now have to deal. Meanwhile it is worthy of special note that on March 24th a telegram from Hussein Pasha Khalifa at Berber reported that Khartoum was besieged by certain Arab tribes, and that others were arriving to assist in the investment.

A telegram from Gordon, dated March 17th, gave

a detailed account of operations against the rebels in which the latter were victorious. Another showed how he had afterwards tried by court-martial and then shot the two traitor Pashas. He added that Khartoum was probably safe, and that as the Nile rose they would account for plenty of rebels, as there was no lack of ammunition. It was this message which enabled Sir Evelyn Baring to say that, as far as he could judge, Gordon was in no immediate danger—an expression of opinion which has somehow been greatly derided. The Envoy's next two telegrams, which had no date, were received on April the 9th. The one described an engagement and a rebel loss. The other said: "I wish I could convey to you my impressions of the truly trumpery nature of this revolt, which 500 determined men could put down. Be assured for the present, and for two months hence, we are as safe here as at Cairo. If you would get by good pay 3,000 Turkish infantry, and 1,000 Turkish cavalry, the affair, including crushing of the Madhi, would be accomplished in four months."

About this time alarming news came in from Berber. The tribes south of Shendy had joined the revolt, and their fellows to the north were ready to march at any moment. The Bishareen Arabs were also in communication with the rebels, with a

view to besieging Berber and cutting off communication with Korosko. Upon receipt of this information the Government inquired from Sir E. Baring whether, under existing circumstances, a movement on Wadi Halfa, such as had often been suggested by Gordon, would assist Berber. Sir E. Baring, after consulting with General Stephenson, replied that in the opinion of that officer the objections to such a movement were insuperable. The news from Berber grew worse; and the Government, recognising that the danger to the town was imminent, again sent to know whether, after consultation with Nubar, Wood, and Stephenson, any steps, by negotiation or otherwise, could be taken to relieve it. The answer returned was, that nothing could be done except by sending an Anglo-Egyptian force to Berber, which would take eight weeks by one route and sixteen by another. H.M. Government therefore sent a message to Hussein Khalifa, at Berber, advising him that no immediate assistance could be given, as an expedition, even if one were undertaken, could not arrive at Berber in less than four months. At the same time several messengers were ordered to be despatched at intervals from Dongola and Berber to Gordon, desiring him to keep the Government informed of any prospective danger at Khartoum, and to prepare them for any such danger, by advices as to

what force would be necessary to assure his removal—its amount, its character, the route it would take, and its time for operation. Expressions of gratitude were added for his gallant, self-sacrificing conduct, and for the good he had achieved.

Gordon's next message at once became historical. It was undated, but in all probability it was sent on April 8th. It ran thus:—"As far as I can understand, the situation is this: you state your intention of not sending any relief up here or to Berber, and you refuse me Zebehr. I consider myself free to act according to circumstances. I shall hold on here as long as I can, and if I can suppress the rebellion I shall do so. If I cannot, I shall retire to the Equator, and leave you the indelible disgrace of abandoning the garrisons of Sennaar, Kassala, Berber, and Dongola, with the certainty that you will eventually be forced to smash up the Mahdi under great difficulties if you would retain peace in Egypt." The breach was complete. The great soldier declined to serve as an instrument of dishonour; and his quondam employers accepted his reproof and the position with that complacency in the face of ignominy and disaster, which of all their titles to fame is perhaps the most valid and the least contested.

It is unnecessary to review the policy pursued

by H.M. Government beyond this point, which marks the time when Gordon had to stand and to act alone. I have shown that throughout they have been heroically consistent; and that is enough. It has been remarked that with consistency of this sort the gods themselves war vainly. But the question of statesmanship is one that need not be debated here.

CHAPTER IX.

ABANDONED.

I do not purpose to tell the story of that expedition which was the immediate outcome of the policy of "Rescue and Retire." But it is worth while to review Lord Wolseley's instructions from the Ministry. As I need hardly remind my readers, they were the result of a consultation between Lord Northbrook, Lord Wolseley, and Sir Evelyn Baring. Apologists of the future will find it difficult either to excuse them or explain. It is laid down that the primary object of the expedition is the relief of Khartoum and the rescue of General Gordon and Colonel Stewart. It follows that the garrisons in Darfour, the [Bahr-el-Gazelle and Equatorial Africa are to be abandoned; that the Sennaar contingent however perilous its position, is to be left to its own devices; and that Kassala, after negotiation from Souakim and Massowah, is to be abandoned to the clemency of the investing tribes. Lord Wolseley is to do his best to compass

the safe retreat of the Egyptian troops in Khartoum, with such of the civil employees and their families as may desire to return to Cairo; but though offensive operations are permitted for the extrication of Gordon and Stewart, the release of their aids and lieges is made dependent upon the success or failure of conciliatory measures. Lord Wolseley may fight for Gordon and Stewart; for their soldiers, he is first of all to negotiate. Only when the diplomatist has failed, must the general come in. With a touch of Dodson and Fogg, he is to combine the aspirations of Wellington and Mr. Henry Richard. What he has in charge is not the honour of England, but her own pecuniary responsibilities and the quicksand of her rulers "principles."

Nor is this the worst. This precious document breathes of illusion and inspired statesmanship throughout. H.M. Government will be glad to see a condition of order established at Khartoum which, so far as all matters connected with the internal administration of the country are concerned, shall be wholly independent of Egypt, though the Egyptian Government are prepared to pay a reasonable subsidy to any chief, or number of chiefs, sufficiently powerful to maintain order along the Nile valley from Wady Halfa to Khartoum, and are sufficiently agreed among themselves to keep the peace, encourage trade with

Egypt, and discourage by every possible means all expeditions for the capture of slaves. This is of course a metamorphosis of our old friend, the hard-and-fast line of policy, this time without the saving grace of evacuation; and this, as, I need hardly remark, is the strong delusion against which Gordon had been steadily warning the Ministry from the day he set foot in Khartoum. Mark Twain's blue jay dropped innumerable acorns through a knot-hole in the roof of a log-house, under the impression that he was not dispersing his treasures in space, but making himself a hoard in a snug, peculiar crevice. Under a kindred impression, and with similar results, did H.M. Government proceed in Egypt. Almost from the beginning the cry of their Envoy at Khartoum had been this: "You can do nothing until you have 'smashed up' the Mahdi;" and now they were expending their strength in establishing the very power it was imperative upon them to destroy. The man they had sent out to withdraw the garrisons and evacuate the country had become the centre and rallying point of all the loyal souls about him; he was nevertheless to be rescued from this glorious position, and that by a force which was great and strong enough to achieve the succour of every Egyptian subject in the Soudan, but which was yet to cease from offensive operations on the instant of his

rescue, and offer to the world the strange and perplexing spectacle of a British Army refraining, unconcerned and idle, from any interference in the affairs of men in distress until that moment the comrades in duty and devotion of the most famous soldier in their own ranks. And then this wonderful rescue accomplished, Lord Wolseley was to retire, and leave the Soudanese to the Mahdi and themselves.

H.M. Government were not anxious about the results. It was felt that something would turn up, which something would in no wise hamper the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the preparation of his next Budget, and in no wise traverse the famous policy of peace, retrenchment, and reform, on whose lines it was understood they were always trying to proceed; and that was enough. They threw the puzzle into the air, and hoped to see its pieces come down in proper order, all accurately fitted together into an allegorical picture of economy, happiness, and universal suffrage. In this singular illusion H.M. Government persisted till the end; they had created it for themselves, and they had in it the pride of the author in his work. They were warned from Khartoum, and warned repeatedly; but, as is the wont of amateurs, they were contemptuous of professional opinion, and impatient of professional control.

Their sympathies lay with the Mahdi (who is a religious man) and the "young nationality" as whose apostle he appeared. Gordon had nothing to back him but facts; and what are facts compared with principles and ideas? Moreover, their supporters thought him a little mad, and said so; and after denying him publicly and publicly repudiating their covenant with him, they had themselves advised him to desert his post and shift for himself, and he had been selfish enough to refuse. It was plain that in electing to rescue him at a cost of ten or twenty millions they were doing as much as could be expected of them: that is to say, a great deal more than any but the best of all possible Governments in the best of all possible worlds would ever have consented to do.

A long silence was broken at last by a series of telegrams received at Massowah on the 25th of September, and at Cairo on the 5th October. Of these three were dated April 27th, the two others the 30th and 31st of July; and though the intelligence conveyed in the earlier ones was superseded by Mr. Power's communication to the *Times*, (already quoted *in extenso*), it is important to our history to reproduce in full—at least, as far as Ministerial "editing" will permit—whatever Gordon has to say.

“GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

“In rebel display to-day, the 21st April, 1884, rebels fired two shots from their gun, from their camp. Thermometer, 92 degrees.

“*April 22nd.*—A lieutenant and two soldiers escaped from rebels; no news of import. We put down mines at village half-hour outside south lines. Spy reports Shendy is invested; if it is taken it is entirely due to you not sending up Zebehr Pasha. If it was justifiable to allow him to raise blacks and herd them down to the slaughter of Trinkitat, it would have been equally so to let him collect men for the Soudan. Steamer attacked rebels, drove them back with loss, and captured three camels, thirty goats. Nile began to rise to-day; this is in advance of usual period. In rebel camp are rumours Abyssinian advance, which I trust, for honour of England, are not true, for what has Abyssinia to do with this question? It is like a big boy getting a little boy to fight his battles.

“*April 23rd.*—Nile still rising. Thunderstorms in all directions at night. The rising of Nile will enable steamers to destroy irrigating machines along river banks, and thus prevent any cultivation. I will pardon peoples who give in allegiance; if they do not, I will liberate their slaves. Thunderstorms over town and in every direction.

“*April 24th.*—Rain during night. Thermometer, 90 degrees. Report says that an expedition started with seventy of our captured soldiers, rockets, and guns, from Obeid, against Saleh Pasha; that the regular soldiers feigned an attack against Saleh, and turned on the rebels, going over to Saleh, with guns, &c. This, if true, will effectually prevent Mahdi trying this again. On Greek Consul’s recommendation, we have issued notes for payment of troops. Rebels made one of their distant attacks on Omduraman.”

Still, despite his treatment by the Government, Gordon was full of hope; and some idea of his cheerfulness may be gathered from the following letters addressed by him to the officer commanding Royal Navy at Massowah:—

“*Khartoum, August 24th, 1884.*

“Received cypher despatch from you and Egerton, dated 27th April, 1884. We have had a series of petty fights with Arabs from the 12th March to the 30th July, when we were able, thank God! to drive them back and open road to Sennaar, and we are now relieved from the immediate pressure of Arabs. We are going to attack them to-morrow, and meditate a raid on Berber in order to let pass to Dongola a convoy which accompanies Colonel Stewart and French and English Consuls. We

shall (D.V.) destroy Berber and return to our pirate nest here. Our steamers are blinded and bullet-proof, and do splendid work, for you see when you have steam on the men cannot run away and must go into action. I hope the 'Euryalus' are all well, and hope you like Massowah in September. We are going to hold out here for ever, and are pretty evenly matched with Mahdi. He has cavalry and we have steamers. We are very cross with you all, for since the 29th March we have had not one word from outer world. I have paid as much as £140 for a spy, and you gave that poor devil (so he says) 20 dollars to go from Massowah to Khartoum. However, I have given him £20. One of our steamers has 970 bullet marks on her; another 850 ditto. Our losses have been slight. We have provisions for five months, and hope to get in more. Stewart got wounded in arm, but is all right. The rôle of our country has not been very noble in Egypt or Soudan. I wish I had three or four of your gunners, for our practice is dismal. Kindest regards to all your officers.

"C. G. GORDON."

"*Khartoum, August 26th, 1884.*

"In continuation of letter of the 24th August, 1884, in which I told you of our attack on Arabs which we meditated. We have (thank God!)

succeeded taking Arab camp and killing Arab Commander-in-Chief (R.I.P.). I do not know our losses as yet. This victory clears our vicinity on three parts of circle. The Arab defeat may be put down to the defection of a part of their forces who came over to us at the moment of attack. The naval forces behaved splendidly, which will, of course, please my friends of Her Majesty's navy. Remember me to Drury, Carter, Leslie, Target, Stopford, if still on board 'Euryalus.'

"You would all delight to be here, and I wish you were, if it was possible.

"There is one bond of union between us and our troops; they know if the town is taken they will be sold as slaves, and we must deny our Lord if we would save our lives.

"I think we hate the latter more than they hate the former. D.V. we will defeat them without any help from outside. Spies from Kordofan report advance of Mahdi with twenty-six guns towards Khartoum. I have always thought this is probable, and that the question will be solved here; but I trust he will not succeed for we have made the place very strong; if he fails he is done for.

"C. G. GORDON."

"*April 27th.*—Usual Friday church parade. Not many rebels in south front. A party crept down

into village opposite Palace and fired volleys, but did no harm. Yesterday steamers went up White Nile, and captured 4 cows, 2 donkeys, 25 sheep, and 3 prisoners, killing 7. We are sending out negroes to entice the slaves of rebels to come to us on promise of freedom. The general opinion is, that all the slaves will desert by degrees, and that the rebels will leave this dangerous vicinity, not for fear of bullets, but for fear of losing their live chattels. We will take the slaves into Government service, giving them their freedom, clothes, and pay; they get nothing from rebels. It may be the beginning of end of slave-holding up here. If you cannot read this telegram make the clerk repeat it, and ask Floyer to order the original European telegrams to be sent down by post.

"*April 26th.*—Issued bank notes to amount of £2,500, redeemable in six months. I heard from Kassala to-day, dated the 13th April; it is all right. Some English authority has threatened the Beni Amr tribe, north of Kassala, the Sheikh writes to me. This tribe has always been a good one; send a kind message to the Sheikh from me. One of our soldiers who formed part of expedition from Kordofan sent against Saleh Pasha with two guns and one rocket has escaped. He says that the expedition consists of 1,000 men, 100 of whom are

my soldiers of Soudan, who sent to say they will turn on the rebels when they fight. He says Slatin Bey still holds out, and that Mahdi is fighting in Kordofan with some tribes who have revolted. We are making decorations for defence of Khartoum—a crescent and star, with words from Koran and date, so we count on victory—officers, silver; men, copper. You will not be asked to pay for them.

“*April 27th.*—We are all well and strong.

“C. G. GORDON.”

“GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING AND NUBAR PASHA.

“*Khartoum, July 30th, 1884.*

“Your telegram of the 5th May, 1884, received.

“Thanks for kind expressions. Nile now high, and we hope to open route to Sennaar in few days. We have had no serious losses. Stewart was slightly wounded in arm near Palace; he is all right now. Be assured that these hostilities are far from being sought for, but we have no option, for retreat is impossible unless we abandon civil employés and their families, which the general feeling of troops is against. I have no advice to give; if we open Sennaar and clear Blue Nile we will be strong enough to retake Berber, that is if Dongola still holds out. As for Mahdi, he will not send succour here. Not one pound of the money you gave me got here; it was

captured at Berber. We want £200,000 sent to Kassala. The expenses of these garrisons must be met. Khartoum costs £500 per diem. If route gets open to Kassala I shall send Stewart there, with journal—that is, if he will consent to go. You may rely on this, that if there was any possible way of avoiding the wretched fighting I should adopt it, for the whole war is hateful to me. The people refuse to let me go out on expeditions, owing to the bother which would arise if anything happened, so I sit on tenter-hooks of anxiety. If I could make anyone chief here I would do it, but it is impossible, for all the good men were killed with Hicks. To show you that Arabs fire well, two of our steamers which are blinded received 970 and 860 hits in their hulls respectively. Since our defeat of the 16th March, 1884, had only thirty killed, fifty or sixty wounded, which is very little. I should think we have fired half-a-million cartridges. The conduct of people and troops has been excellent. I was thinking of issuing Proclamation liberating the slaves of those in arms, but have deferred doing so for fear of complication. I have great trust that God will bring us out triumphantly, and with no great loss on either side. We have queer stories as to fall of Berber. Arabs captured there all Stewart's hussar uniform, and my medals, &c. It may be bad

taste to say it, but if we get out of this give Stewart a K.C.M.G., and spare me at all costs. You will thus save me the disagreeableness of having to refuse, but I hate these things. If we get out it is in answer to prayer, and not by our might, and it is a true pleasure to have been here, though painful enough at times. Stewart's journal is copious. I only hope it will get down to you when I send it. Land mines are the things for defence in future; we have covered the works with them, and they have deterred all attacks and done much execution.

"Since the 30th March, 1884, date of your Cairo despatch, we have had no news from you. Seyd Mahomet Osman, of Kassala, ought to be the route for your despatches, and you ought to give him a present of £500, for he saved Kassala. We have made a decoration, with three degrees, silver gilt, silver, and pewter, with inscription, "Siege of Khartoum," with a grenade in centre. School children and women have also received one; consequently I am very popular with the black ladies of Khartoum. We have issued paper notes to amount of £26,000, and borrowed £50,000 from merchants, which you will have to meet. I have sent in addition £8,000 paper notes to Sennaar. What Kassala is doing for money I do not know; of course we only get taxes paid in lead, so you

are running up a good bill up here. The troops and people are full of heart; I cannot say the same for all the Europeans. The Arabs are in poor heart. I should say that about 2,000 determined men alone keep them in the field. I expect it will end in a terrible famine throughout the land. Spy yesterday stated the 'Queen of England' had arrived at Korosko. Perhaps it is a steamer. The only reinforcements the Soudan has received since the 27th November, 1883, date when Hicks' defeat was known at Cairo, is seven persons, including myself! and we have sent down over 600 soldiers and 2,000 people. The people here and Arabs laugh over it. I shall not leave Khartoum until I can put some one in. If the Europeans like to go to the Equator, I will give them steamers, but I will not leave these people after all they have gone through. As for routes, I have told you that the one from Wady Halfa along right bank of Nile to Berber is the best, and, had not Berber fallen, would have been a picnic. The other route is from Senhit to Kassala, and to Abou Haraz on Blue Nile, which would be safe up to Kassala, but I fear it is too late. We must fight it out with our own means: if blessed by God, we shall succeed; if not His will, so be it. The main thing is to send money to Kassala. Where is Wood? Kind regards to him

and Generals Stephenson and Graham. Why write in cypher. It is useless, for Arabs have no interpreter. You say your feeling is to abandon Soudan; so be it, but before you do that you must take down Egyptian population, and this the Arabs do not see. According to all accounts, 5,000 were massacred at Berber. All is for the best. I will conclude in saying we will defend ourselves to the last; that I will not leave Khartoum; that I will try and persuade all Europeans to escape, and that I am still sanguine that, by some means not clear, God will give us an issue. What was result of your negotiations for opening road Suakin to Berber? The Arabs captured the money (you gave me) at Berber, but it is only the money which the Egyptian Pashas have ground out of the Soudan since their occupation.

“C. G. GORDON.

“P.S. *July 31st*, 1884.—Reading over your telegram of the 5th May, 1884, you ask me ‘to state cause and intention in staying at Khartoum, knowing Government means to abandon Soudan,’ and in answer I say, I stay at Khartoum because Arabs have shut us up, and will not let us out. I also add that even if the road was opened the people would not let me go unless I gave them some government or took them with me, which I could

not do. No one would leave more willingly than I would if it was possible.

“C. G. G.”

“GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

“*Khartoum, July 31st, 1884.*

“We continue, thank God, to drive Arabs back up Blue Nile, and hope to open road to Sennaar in eight days or less, and to recapture small steamer lost by Saleh Bey. We then hope to send an expedition to surprise and recapture Berber. It is a *sine quâ non* that you send me Zebehr; otherwise my stay here is indefinite. And you should send £50,000 to Dongola, to be forwarded to Berber if we take it. River begins to fall in, say, four months. Before that time you must either let the Sultan take back the Soudan, or send Zebehr, with a subsidy yearly. D.V., we will send down to Berber to take to it the Egyptian troops here, so that they will be on their way home; and I shall send Stewart. We hope (D.V.) to recapture the two steamers which were lost at Berber on its fall.

“The Equator and Bahr-Gazelle provinces can be (D.V.) relieved later on, and their troops brought here. As to Darfour, it must be afterwards thought of, for we do not know if it still holds out. As for Kordofan, I hope and believe the Mahdi has his hands full. I would vacate Sennaar if it was possible, but I do

not think it is, and also the moral effect of its evacuation would be fatal to our future success, while we have not food to feed the refugee people who would come here. You will see, if we open road to Sennaar from here, we cut the Arab movement in two by Blue Nile. I repeat I have no wish to retain this country. My sole desire is to restore the prestige of the Government in order to get out garrisons, and to put some ephemeral government in position, in order to get away.

“(Signed) C. G. GORDON.”

These telegrams, as I have said, were handed in on the 5th October at Cairo, but nearly three weeks before two important messages from Gordon were received by the Privy Seal of the Khedive. They were in Arabic, and the only clue to their date was a reference to the fall of Berber, which showed that they had been written after May 20th. In the first Gordon states, as his reason for demanding reinforcements, that on his arrival at Khartoum he found it impossible to withdraw the soldiers and employees, on account of the rising of the tribes and the severance of his communications. No heed, he adds, was paid to his demands, and the result was the fall of Berber. He goes on to put a most significant question: “Is it right,” he asks, “that I should have been sent to Khartoum with

only seven followers after the destruction of Hicks's army, and no attention paid to me till communications were cut?" The question is not personal. Gordon does not mean to ask if this was right towards himself, but if it was right towards the great cause in which he was engaged, and for which he had jeopardized his life. A later message, dated August 23rd, clearly shows what, in his opinion, had resulted from the conduct thus challenged. It was now necessary, he said, that English troops be sent to the Soudan, and that Zebehr Pasha be appointed in his room, with an assistant, and a salary of £8,000 a year; that not before the arrival of an English army would the Egyptian troops be able to return down the Nile; that if after this the Sultan wanted the Soudan he could have it at the cost of 20,000 men; and that if no part of this advice were taken, H.M. Government would be responsible for his Egyptians' salaries and lives. The time when a handful of British soldiers at Wady Halfa could have settled the Soudan was passed; the time when Zebehr's influence alone could have been successfully pitted against the Mahdi's was passed likewise; and now the solution of the problem meant the employment either of Zebehr and an assistant with a backing of British bayonets or the permanent and sanctioned interference of the Turk.

Lord Wolseley was already on his way to Dongola when this intelligence was conveyed to H.M. Government; and once again were the public exercised in spirit as to the reason—the amazing and impenetrable reason—why their rulers, not content with questioning their Envoy, religiously insisted upon stopping their ears to his replies. It was evident that Gordon's mission was a failure, and it was as evident that it was so by no fault of Gordon's. The paper plan of action drawn up in Downing Street had been found impracticable at Khartoum. With certain alterations, it might have worked; but these involved the immediate expenditure of several thousands of pounds and a risk of future political complications, and they were indignantly refused. The inspired statesmanship by which this refusal was dictated was ere long to cost the country many millions of pounds and the world some thousands of lives, the noblest of these times among them.

CHAPTER X.

THE SACRIFICE.

IN a despatch already quoted Gordon announced his intention of sending Stewart and Power to Berber "in order to open communications with Dongola, and in order to carry on the necessary discussions in connection with the Soudan." This was confirmed in the following message to Nubar Pasha, received later and dated Aug. 23rd :—
"To-day I have appointed the three steamers to inspect the situation of Sennaar and to discover its news. On their return here, I will detail a military force from Khartoum, composed of 2,000 men, and send it by steamers to Berber to retake it from the hands of the rebels, with provisions for two months only. We will send with this force his Excellency Stewart Pasha, Sub-Governor, and all the Consuls here existing. After the recapture of Berber, the troops and Consuls will remain there while his Excellency Stewart Pasha will proceed to Dongola by a small boat especially dedicated (prepared?) for

his voyage to that direction, to parley on the Soudan question, and what the situation of Berber will come to. These troops will leave for Berber after fifteen days from this date."

Gordon's motive was twofold : he wanted to give his comrades a chance of life and freedom on the one hand, and on the other, he purposed to collect such information as would stir the Government to some kind of action. But his prudence was unavailing ; his magnanimity went unrewarded save with sorrow. The detachment marched on Sept. 10th, 1884 ; and when the rebel positions had been destroyed the main body returned to Khartoum, while Stewart, Power, and about forty others steamed down the river for Dongola.

Early in October Major Kitchener sent home the news of their fortune. The steamer had run aground, and the whole party had been cut off. For a little while it was hoped that Stewart had escaped with life, but by the end of the month all doubt was at an end. It was positively known that both he and Power had perished with the rest, and that H.M. Government might be credited with the authorship of a massacre the more. It was not on so large a scale as those at Sinkat and Tokar ; but it included a couple of Englishmen, and that was enough to make it memorable. Stewart, like his chief, had gone out

at a moment's notice, and like him he had fought as became an Englishman, against the odds for which, in their policy of impotence, H.M.'s Government were responsible. He had never seen his chief till the night of the 18th January, when they left London together on their desperate adventure; but the dream of his life had been to serve under Gordon's orders, and Gordon, when asked at Downing Street to choose his lieutenant, chose him upon the spot. He knew his man, and loved him; and that was enough. "Be sure," he said to a friend, on the platform at Charing Cross, "be sure that he will not go into any danger which I do not share; and I am sure that when I am in danger he will not be far behind." And it was, as I have said, in the hope of saving his valiant lieutenant from what by this time he had come to regard as the inevitable end that Gordon sent him out of Khartoum. He despaired of life, and preferred to meet his fate alone.

It was through Lord Wolseley, then at Wady Halfa, that our worst anticipations were confirmed. He instituted an investigation; and towards the end of October he sent the following telegrams to Sir Evelyn Baring:—"Two messengers sent to inquire as to the fate of Colonel Stewart's party have returned. They report that the steamer

was towing two boats containing M. Naoom, with his brother and family. As the enemy was found to be overtaking them, the convoy boats were cut adrift, and all on board of them were made prisoners. Shortly afterwards the steamer struck on a rock near Catadich. There were at this time forty-five persons on board, four of whom were women. Colonel Stewart and two Consuls, one of whom was named Nicola, were among those on board. The whole party, except two natives, were killed by Sheikh Suleiman. This information was obtained from one of the two survivors by the messenger. The man said that Colonel Stewart, whom he described as a tall man with a light beard, was certainly on board the steamer." It was not, however, till four months later that the full truth was known. Then Hussein, the stoker of Stewart's steamer, escaped from the enemy, and came into our camp. This is the story he told: The party had left Khartoum in September. There were with them two other steamers. On board the "Abdai" were Colonel Stewart, two Pashas, two European Consuls, Hassan Bey, twelve Greeks, and some Egyptian soldiers, besides the crew. When they reached Berber they shelled the forts there. After this the other steamers went back. They came on down the Nile. Nothing happened until they had

passed Abu 'Hamed, but on September 18th the steamer struck on a rock. They were then passing through Wad Gamr's country. As they had passed down they had seen the people running away into the hills on both sides of the river. When it was found that the steamer could not be got off the rock, the small boat, filled with useful things, was sent to a little island near. Four trips were made. Then Colonel Stewart himself spiked the guns and threw them overboard, and also two boxes of ammunition. The people now came down to the right bank in great numbers, shouting, "Give us peace and grain." Stewart's party answered, "Peace." Suleiman Wad Gamr himself was in a small house near the bank, and he came out and called to Colonel Stewart to land without fear, but said that the soldiers must be unarmed or the people would be afraid of them. Colonel Stewart, after talking it over with the others, then crossed in the boats, with the two English Consuls and Hassan Bey, and entered the house of a blind man, Fakir Etman, to arrange with Suleiman for the purchase of camels to take the party down to Dongola. None of the four had any arms, with the exception of Colonel Stewart, who carried a small revolver in his pocket. While they were in the house the rest began to land in the boat. After a little time these saw Suleiman

come out of the house, with a copper water-pot in his hand. He made signs to the people, who were all gathered near the house. They immediately divided into two parties, one entering the house, the other rushing down towards those gathered on the bank, shouting and waving their spears. Hussein was with the party who had landed when they charged down, and on seeing the move he and the rest threw themselves into the river. The natives fired, killing some of the swimmers; many others were drowned, and the rest speared as they came near the bank. Hussein swam to the island, and hid there till dark, when he was made prisoner with some others, and sent to Berti. He heard that Colonel Stewart and the two Englishmen were killed at once. Hassan Bey held the blind man before him, so that they could not spear him. They spared his life, and he afterwards escaped to Berber. Two artillerymen, two sailors, and three natives are still alive at Berber, where they were sent by Suleiman. All the money found on board and in the victims' pockets was divided among the men who did the murder. Everything else of value was placed in two boxes and sent under a guard to Berber. The bodies of Stewart, Power, and the others were thrown into the river.*

* See Appendix 17.

So now Gordon was alone, the only Englishman in the Equatorial citadel. Hunger and doubt were sore upon him and upon his people. But they still loved and believed in him, though, as he said, alluding to the long-delayed relief, "we appeared even as liars to the people of Khartoum." "While you are eating, drinking and resting on good beds," he writes, "we and those with us, both soldiers and servants, are watching by night and day, endeavouring to quell the movement of this false Mahdi." The old men and women had gone, and Gordon pulled down the empty quarters of the town and walled in the rest. Meantime he had built himself a tower of observation, from the top of which he could command the whole country round. At dawn he slept; by day he went the rounds, looked to his defences, administered justice, cheered the spirit of his people, did such battle as he could with famine and discontent; and every night he mounted to the top of his tower, and there, alone with his duty and his God, a universal sentinel, he kept watch over his ramparts, and prayed for the help that never came. Of his thoughts and sufferings during these tremendous vigils who now shall tell?

Stewart's death had hardly been confirmed when the most alarming rumours went afloat concerning

the condition of Khartoum. They were French in origin and feeling—that is to say, they were at once unkindly and discreditable; but such was the public anxiety about Gordon that for a time they were fully believed. They indeed achieved such a point of verisimilitude that they deceived a number of the wisest. The best journals circulated a story about the Khedive having telegraphed to the Queen and Prince of Wales news of Gordon's capture by the Mahdi. In addition to this a very circumstantial account of the fall of Khartoum came from Cairo, and, as a crowning sensation, it was averred that Gordon had exploded his mines, and blown himself and great numbers of the enemy into the air. One result of these reports was a touching tribute from his old friends the Chinese. On the announcement reaching Canton that General Gordon had been killed in the Soudan, the Viceroy paraded the garrison, who fired volleys as if over his grave, while the squadron in the river lowered their flags to half-mast, and fired minute guns.

To this time of doubt there succeeded a time of confidence and hope. On the 14th November a messenger from Major Kitchener arrived at Dongola with a long letter from Gordon to Lord Wolseley, dated November 4th, and a set of cypher despatches for the Government. Their contents were not dis-

closed, but the public were allowed to know that all was well at Khartoum, and that the hero hoped to hold out till the arrival of the expedition. He had heard of Colonel Stewart's death, for which he expressed great grief; and the Mahdi was eight hours distant from Khartoum. These statements the Mudir of Dongola was able to confirm. He had received a message from Gordon promoting him and his fellow notables a step in rank, and exhorting him to fight it to the last, as he himself intended to do. From the messenger himself the Mudir learned that the General had illuminated Khartoum in honour of Lord Wolseley and his men. It was further reported that there was plenty of food, and that thirty boats had come in laden with grain from the Blue Nile on the day of the messenger's departure. The price of corn, he said, was thirty shillings per ardeb, or forty-five shillings per quarter. He added that Gordon was very powerful, and was believed in by every man in the city. Soon after another messenger stated that Gordon had even been joined by deserters from the Mahdi's camp; that he was making his own powder; that he had twelve steamers afloat and at work; and that the people were beginning to consider his rule preferable to that of the False Prophet's.

All this was significant of great activity on

Gordon's part. Its import had not been lost on the Mahdi. That leader, seeing that he must strike a decisive blow at once, or lose his ground for ever in the Soudan, marched up from Obeid with some 30,000 men, took his stand at Omdurman, within a few miles of the beleaguered city, and summoned the Englishman to surrender. This was the answer: "If you are the real Mahdi dry up the Nile, and come over, and I'll surrender." The challenge, it is said, was taken seriously, and the Mahdi bidding his followers walk across the Nile, three thousand perished in the attempt. After this he at once began the attack. But Gordon, with his twelve steamers and eight hundred devoted followers, after eight hours' hard fighting outside the walls, succeeded, by means of mines, in blowing up his forts, and drove him out of Omdurman, southward to a place called El Margat. There the defeated pretender went into hiding in a cave, and prophesied to the effect that there should be sixty days of rest, and that after these blood would flow like water.

Now in Gordon's letter of November 4th* to Lord Wolseley, he said two things which (with others) H.M. Government thought fit to suppress. They were: that he had just enough provisions to last

* See Appendix 18.

him forty days ; and that he had sent certain of his steamers down the Nile towards Shendy to await the arrival of the expedition. These facts, hitherto not made known, are most important.

The progress of the expedition, up to this point, had by no means justified the calculations of those who planned it. From time to time the public had been treated to a number of ingenious prognostications of the date of its arrival. First, it was said that our troops would be before the gates of Khartoum on January 14th ; next it was the middle of February ; and then the time stretched out to the middle of March. But signs of greater haste were soon apparent. Lord Wolseley offered a hundred pounds to the regiment covering the distance from Sarras to Debbeh most expeditiously and with least damage to boats ; and this was regarded as having extraordinary significance. He also dispatched Sir Herbert Stewart on the immortal march to Gakdul. Stewart's force, composed principally of the Mounted Infantry and Camel Corps, and led by a troop of the 19th Hussars, acting as scouts—numbering about 1,100 in all—set out from Korti on December 30th. Its destination was about one hundred miles from headquarters, and about eighty from the Nile at Shendy. The enterprise, difficult and desperate

as it was, was achieved with perfect success. Stewart himself returned to Korti on January 5th with a cheerful report as to supplies and position. He had established at Hambok a post to improve the water supply, and had left the Guards at Gakdul strongly fortified in an impregnable position. A strong convoy was now sent to the latter place, and General Stewart himself started with another for Metemneh. Altogether the prospect was hopeful enough; and to add to the general satisfaction, certain Arabs seized on the way had flung off the Mahdi's uniform and spat upon it, declaring that they would never have joined the False Prophet had they known the English were coming. All indeed were in dread of being shot or hanged. The English army, they said, would meet with no resistance on the way to Khartoum; and General Gordon's steamers were waiting on the Nile.

On the 17th January Sir Herbert Stewart engaged the enemy on the road to Metemneh, and after defeating some ten thousand Arabs—collected from Berber, Metemneh, and Omdurman—pushed forward to the Abu Klea Wells. His tactics were much the same as those of General Graham at El Teb, and those of the Mahdi's men—of attacking when thirst and fatigue had well-nigh prostrated the force—were at all

points similar to those adopted against Hicks. Our losses were 65 non-commissioned officers and men killed and 85 wounded, with nine officers killed—among them Colonel Burnaby—and nine wounded. Stewart at once pushed on for Metemneh and the Nile. He left the Wells on the 18th Jan. to occupy Metemneh, if possible, but, failing that, to make for the Nile and entrench himself. After a night's march, some five miles south of Metemneh, the column found itself in presence of an enemy said to have been about eighteen thousand strong. Stewart halted and formed a zareba under a deadly fire. He himself was mortally hurt in the groin, and Mr. Cameron, of the *Standard*, and Mr. Herbert, of the *Morning Post*, were killed. The zareba completed, the column advanced in square, and the Arabs, profiting by Abu Klea, moved forward in echelon, apparently with the purpose of charging. At thirty yards or so they were brought to bay, so terrific was the fire from the square, and so splendidly served was Norton's artillery. For two hours the battle raged; and then the Arabs, "mown down in heaps," gave way. Meantime Sir Charles Wilson had made a dash for the Nile, where he found steamers and reinforcements from Gordon, and the laconic message, "All right at Khartoum. Can hold out for years."

Apparently a more fitting climax to that terrible day (the 20th) could not have been. With Sir Charles Wilson steaming up to the gates of Khartoum in Gordon's own steamers, and the city able to "hold out for years," nothing seemed wanting to make the expedition a triumph. "Gordon and Wolseley have touched hands," we said; and the whole world (France excepted) looked on and shouted with delight. In the joy at the good news, none had stopped to consider the true meaning of the message, "All right. Can hold out for years," for none was aware that nearly two months before Gordon had said he had just provisions enough for forty days, and that what he really meant was that he had come to his last biscuit. The message—which was written for the enemy—was dated Dec. 29, and Sir Charles Wilson would reach Khartoum on Jan. 28, just a month after its despatch.

The world knew nothing of all this, and rejoiced in the prospect of their hero's relief; but the anxiety of his immediate friends was intense. It was founded on their private knowledge which, with Lord Wolseley's action, betrayed the fact that there was imminent and instant danger. A messenger who brought in a letter (written for the enemy, and dated Khartoum, Dec. 14), which said, "Khartoum all right,"

had a confidential despatch to the Commander-in-Chief, whose tenour was as follows:—

“We are besieged on three sides, Omdurman, Halfaya, and Hoggi-Ali. Fighting goes on day and night. Enemy cannot take us except by starving us out. Do not scatter your troops. Enemy are numerous. Bring plenty of troops if you can. We still hold Omdurman on the left bank and the fort on the right bank.

“The Mahdi’s people have thrown up earthworks within rifle-shot of Omdurman. The Madhi lives out of gun-shot.

“About four weeks ago the Mahdi’s people attacked Omdurman and disabled one steamer. We disabled one of Mahdi’s guns.

“Three days after fighting was renewed on the south, and rebels were again driven back.

“Saleh Bey and Slaten Bey are chained in Mahdi’s camp.

“Our troops in Khartoum are suffering from lack of provisions. Food we still have is little; some grain and biscuit.

“We want you to come quickly. You should come by Metemneh or Berber. Make by these two roads. Do not leave Berber in your rear. Keep enemy in your front, and when you have taken Berber send me word from Berber.

“Do this without letting rumours of your approach spread abroad.

“In Khartoum there are no butter nor dates, and little meat. All food is very dear.”

The public, carefully kept in ignorance of these necessities, and hopeful beyond their wont, were simply stupified to hear, on Feb. 5, that Khartoum was in the hands of the Mahdi and Gordon captured or dead. The news fell on them like a bolt from a clear sky. Sir Charles Wilson, detached to the relief of the beleaguered city after the battle of Metemneh, and journeying thither in one of Gordon's own steamers, for reasons not hitherto explained, delayed his start too long, and arrived on the scene of action two days too late. He found the streets of the fallen city crowded with rebels; the Government House, its flag-staff naked, was wrecked. Of Gordon there was nowhere any sign. He had to escape back down the Nile as best he could, under a heavy fire from both banks. “We could not land under such opposition,” says Lieutenant Stewart-Wortley in his report to Lord Wolseley of these events, “so turned round and ran down stream. No flags flying from Government House in Khartoum, and the house appeared wrecked. Only one man killed and five wounded in steamers. On Jan. 31 the steamer on which were Sir C. Wilson and all his

party was wrecked about four miles above enemy's position below bottom of Shabluka Cataract. The other steamer had been previously wrecked on Jan. 29. We reached Gubat in small boats at 2 p.m. the same day. Fall of Khartoum on Jan. 26 * he reports to be without doubt; but fate of Gordon uncertain, as reports are conflicting, but general opinion is he is killed, but no preponderance of evidence either way. Some say he is shut up in church at Khartoum, with some Greeks. Fall of Khartoum has determined Shukriyeh tribes to join the Mahdi, so east bank of Nile as well as left bank is now hostile to us. The fear of the English is great among the natives. General Earle's advance awaited with anxiety by them. Natives say Mahdi was very hard pressed for supplies at Omdurman. It is said by natives that he will have great difficulty in persuading his Emirs to attack us. Messenger from the Mahdi reached Sir C. Wilson when in steamer on Jan. 29, telling him Gordon had adopted Mahdi's uniform, and calling upon us to surrender; that he would not write again, but if we did not become Mahomedans he would wipe us off the face of the earth. It is said that Faragh Pasha treacherously

* The correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* affirms that had Wilson hastened his movements, and taken the advice of Lord Charles Beresford, who urged an instant advance from Metemneh, he might have reached Khartoum on the evening of the 25th.

made terms with Mahdi, and opened the gates of the city to Mahdi's troops."

The release of Sir Charles Wilson and his party seems to have exercised the official mind far more than the fall of Khartoum or the fate of Gordon; yet the position, perilous for a few hours, was scarcely comparable to that which the English Envoy had been constrained by his employers to take up and defend during the whole of the past year. While only Arabs could be spared to collect details about the fall of Khartoum, Englishmen hastened to Tuti Island to rescue the belated expedition. So that while the whole world waited breathless for news of Gordon, our correspondents had no voice save for the brilliant little feat of arms by which Lord Charles Beresford delivered Gordon's would-be deliverers.

The news was true; Gordon was dead. The Nemesis had come at last. Napoleon gilded the dome of the Invalides to divert the mind of France from the consideration of his flight from Moscow; and Mr. Gladstone, hungering for peace and security in office, his conscience sophisticated to the highest capacity of self-delusion, had masked his desertion of Gordon in a new Franchise Bill demonstration and a second Midlothian campaign, and, deceived in these, had achieved a specta-

cular expedition for the relief of an Envoy who had protested against being relieved. "Your expedition," Gordon had said in the suppressed letter of Nov. 4 to Lord Wolseley, "is for relief of garrison which I failed to accomplish. I decline to agree that it is for me personally." Now the bubble had burst, and the whole object of the expedition had vanished into space. His choice of the Nile route notwithstanding, no layman had in his mind to blame Lord Wolseley, nor any of those entrusted with the task of getting the expedition to its journey's end; but the Government were not so fortunate. Their indifference was patent; the stupid selfishness by which their schemes of policy and no policy had been dictated was miserably apparent; and by all, save the dolts and formalists who (with Mr. Gladstone at their head) can see no wrong in anything that Mr. Gladstone does, they were charged with the authorship of this heavy calamity. Gordon had asked them nothing they had not refused, had offered no suggestion they had not contumeliously put by. He had stood to his post like a soldier and a gentleman; and they had looked on from afar, counselling the shame of flight while counsel was possible, and electioneering and talking nonsense to the mob when the isolation of Khartoum was accomplished, and their Envoy, having so far forgotten

their transcendent merits as to find fault with them, had become of greater account to the country than themselves. It was common talk that to their great leader, rapt in that ecstasy of self-approval to which the empire is indebted for so much fine principle and bad statecraft, Gordon—refusing alike to run away or get himself killed, and demonstrating publicly that duty and honour are facts beyond the touch of sophistry—was not merely an eyesore in the fair prospect of Egyptian business, but a living impeachment, a personal and peculiar reproach. It was suspected, and that not silently, that their desertion had been wilful, their inability to make up their minds apparent rather than real. It was remarked that, with the news of the fall of Khartoum a few hours' old, Mr. Gladstone felt light-hearted enough to spend the evening at a theatre of farce. It is not surprising that in no great while these suspicions became certainties; so that when the Prime Minister, with rare good taste, enrolled himself a member of the Gordon Memorial Committee, a number of people protested vigorously, refused to subscribe unless his name were withdrawn, and even referred, with some bitterness, to the very different behaviour of Iscariot.

Meanwhile, the rumour of Gordon's death was but half-believed, the wish being father to the

thought. Until it was confirmed there was nothing to be done. Were he alive, there was nothing left but to await the dictation of the Mahdi's terms, and what these terms would be had long ago been elucidated by a certain scout escaped from Obeid : "The Mahdi is going to Khartoum to take Gordon prisoner and exchange him for Arabi." To move before Gordon's fate was known would be to spoil what little chance there was of saving him. On the other hand, if he had taken refuge in the citadel, where he was known to have magazined his stores and ammunition, with his wonderful resource, there was yet a hope of his holding out ; but even then it would be impossible for Lord Wolseley to reach Khartoum under a month, or for General Earle to lend any aid from the Suakim side in less time. In this way speculation ran riot for many days ; and though reports of assassination, each differing from the other, came in with every telegram from the seat of war, people could not bring themselves to believe that Gordon was dead.

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CHAPTER XI.

"TRAILING CLOUDS OF GLORY."

THE confusion of events was almost equalled by the confusion of reports. From one quarter it was asserted Gordon had been murdered ; from another that he was alive and holding the Catholic Church with some Greeks and a band of faithful Soudanese. Some said he was killed fighting to the last, while others described how he was stabbed as he hurried into the street to encounter the invading forces. One writer set forth particulars of a desperate struggle and general massacre ; another was positive there had been neither battle nor slaughter. This last account for a time was credited, as it received a sort of confirmation through the Mahdi himself, whose messenger to Sir Charles Wilson told him Gordon was in his master's hands and had assumed his master's uniform. The dates imagined were as perplexing and contradictory as the incidents. Moreover, one and all were based on probabilities, and on the various reports gathered from natives, so

that for a time hope was uppermost, and few would believe the worst.

One thing was clear. Khartoum had fallen, and this through the treachery of Faragh Pasha, Commander of the Soudanese troops. Gordon had always mistrusted this rascal, though he was a creation of his own. Treason, indeed, had been proved against him on a former occasion, and he had been condemned to death. But Gordon, who, like Cæsar, has always erred in the direction of mercy, had yielded to his false lieutenant's prayers and professions of loyalty, and had forgiven him. For a time the traitor's conduct appears to have been stainless ; but it is inferred that, from fear of punishment on the arrival of the expedition, he made terms with the Mahdi and received the promise of a price for Khartoum. This portion of the story was presently confirmed ; and on February 13th the world knew that Gordon was certainly dead. The black news was conveyed in a despatch from General Brackenbury. On the previous day, it ran, a private soldier found in a donkey's saddle-bag, on the battle-field of Kirbekan, a document which stated that Gordon had been killed. Then messengers arrived across the desert bringing news from Khartoum, and the Mudir of Dongola, who had steadily refused to believe in the fall of the city, was at length con-

vinced. The account was given by a certain cavass, a native of Wady Halfa. After remaining a prisoner a few days this man was released, and some of his money returned. With this he bought a camel, and made his way across the desert to Debbah, where he arrived in twelve days. Faragh Pasha, he said, was a black slave liberated and made military commandant by General Gordon. He was suspected of treachery, and dared to receive letters from the Mahdi, which he told the General were of no importance. He opened the gates in the south wall to the Niami men (of the great slave tribe), who were besieging that side:—"General Gordon, hearing the confusion in the town, went out, armed with a sword and axe.* He was accompanied by Ibraheim Bey, the chief clerk, and twenty men. He went towards the house of the Austrian Consul. On his way he met a party of the Mahdi's men, who fired a volley. General Gordon was shot dead. The Arabs then rushed on with their spears, and killed the chief clerk and nine of the men; the rest escaped."

Then came the following despatch from a correspondent at Abu Kru, dated February 12, and his account was but too soon confirmed by Lord Wolseley himself:—

* This, like the story of the revolver, repeated some weeks afterwards, is so uncharacteristic that I do not hesitate to reject it as impossible.

"General Gordon's trusted messenger, George, a well-known Khartoum Greek merchant, who for months past has been entrusted with all letters passing from or to the besieged, and who has been living on board one of the steamers sent here, states that nearly all the natives' stories agree that General Gordon—on hearing that he was betrayed—made a rush for the magazine in the Catholic mission. Finding that the enemy were actually in possession of that building by the treachery of Faragh, General Gordon returned to Government House, and was killed while trying to re-enter it. Some say that he was shot, others that he was stabbed. The Mahdi's people were admitted to Khartoum at ten o'clock on the night of Jan. 26. George adds that the rebels massacred all the white people, men, women, and children, throwing the bodies into the Nile, many of which corpses he and others saw while with Sir Charles Wilson's party. The families of all the men on board General Gordon's steamers were also murdered. General Gordon clearly anticipated his fate, for he wrote a number of farewell letters during the month of January. These were sent off in a mail-bag on board the steamer, and given to George, who handed them over to Sir Charles Wilson on Jan. 21. Among the letters were one for his sister, and others for his brother,



for Captain Brocklehurst, Lord Wolseley, and Sir Charles Wilson. There were also six complete monthly diaries of the siege of Khartoum, narrating all the events that had taken place since Colonel Stewart left him. In his letter to Sir Charles Wilson, General Gordon wrote that he hoped, by God's will, the English would arrive in time to save him and others, but feared they would be too late ; that he knew he was being betrayed, but was powerless to prevent it. His information was that Khartoum was to be surrendered on Jan. 19 to the Mahdi. He could get away if he wished to run ; but refused to go, and would remain to the last. As he would not permit himself to be taken prisoner, there was nothing left but death. Khasm-el-Mous, the commandant with the steamers here, who has proved so loyal throughout, states that even had the English got to Khartoum a month earlier they would have been too late to save Gordon, for the two traitors had committed themselves, and would never have awaited our arrival, as they feared that General Gordon would punish them.* The people of Khartoum had despaired of ever seeing English soldiers, and tried to make the best terms they could. After

* Khasm-el-Mous is an Arab, and native reports must be received with a certain suspicion. The Arabs are born liars. Mr. Gladstone himself, though he tried his hardest, and deeply as his sympathies were engaged, failed to make anything of this and similar reports.

the battle of Abu Klea the Mahdi no doubt promised much."

In this way died Charles George Gordon. In a lost battle, yet trailing such clouds of glory as scarce any of his race have been apparelled withal, did this rare and shining spirit return to his home. From that moment of the ride to Abu Hamed, he had been the most conspicuous figure of all Christendom; and to the world at large the fact of his death was a shock of pain. His heroism had become a universal possession. It was felt that he belonged not to England, but to humanity. It was recognized that all this while he had been doing battle, not alone for Khartoum and his "poor sheep" of the Soudan, but as Civilization's knight-errant in her eternal conflict with the forces of barbarism. And in China as in Spain, in Italy as in Russia, in Berlin as in London, in Brussels and Copenhagen as in New York and San Francisco, his loss was accepted as a local and peculiar calamity. There is no more eloquent and enlightened tribute to his memory than that we owe to the genius of Castelar; I am told that Count von Moltke has mourned him almost as a son; even in France, with its mean ambitions and single-minded stupidity of devotion to the practice of realism and the theory of the "human document," there were men who proclaimed his

worth. All over England there were funeral services in his honour; in many cities was ordained and observed a day of mourning. To the sense of national disaster there was superadded a sense of national humiliation. As was but just, we suffered most in his loss who were primarily and directly responsible for his desertion and death.

The stories I have quoted as to the circumstances of our bereavement are but so many in a hundred. All agree as to the fact of death; no two are alike in detail; none is of unimpeachable authority; and to this day there are many whose faith in his infinite capacity of resource is such that they have not brought themselves to believe that his disappearance is other than temporary, and that he will not one day return unharmed. His life, indeed, is a personality of romance, and already the elements of a legend are in process of accretion about his memory. That we shall hear of false Gordons in the Soudan is probable enough; but I fear that it is but cherishing illusion to deem that his generous and commanding spirit is not quenched in dissolution and lost to us for ever, save for its imperishable example. True it is that the Mahdi in his letter to Sir Charles Wilson makes no mention whatever of his fallen foe; that while his display of the dead man's head to distant and hesitating tribes would, on his part,

have been excellent and natural policy, we have had from him, nor from anyone else, no word of Gordon's body; that since the "crowning mercy" of Khartoum he has not advanced a yard northward, but, retreating south, has been visited with signs that for the time his influence is waning and his cause is dwindling in popularity and repute. True it is, too, that such a sudden emergence, as of "a reappearing star," would be in perfect consonance with the glorious romance of Gordon's past and the surprising qualities of his genius. But the world has long since accepted the darker view of things; and it is impossible to believe it has not done well.

He died at two-and-fifty years old; in the fulness of genius and energy, in the plenitude of experience, at the very top of influence and authority; with such a capacity of work as has been possessed by no man since Napoleon, and with potentialities of active life and service unequalled in his generation, perhaps the foremost man of the world. In holding Khartoum with the pitiful means at his disposal against the splendid fanaticism which broke the English square at Tamai and Abu Klea, he had done an achievement which amazes the more the more it is considered; but there is no doubt that, had he survived, it would have been paralleled, if it had not been surpassed, by his work for the enlightened

monarch whose commission brought him westward from Jerusalem. It is an open secret that it was His Majesty's purpose to make him King of the Congo, and give his genius full play in the task of laying the foundations of civilization in the vast country watered by that great and mysterious stream. Much as we know of him, and magnificent as are the results we saw him achieve, it is impossible to estimate the value of the services he might here have done. But we know that they could not but have been great; we know that Mr. Gladstone willed otherwise; we know that a great influence for good has been removed from us, that the cause of humanity is the poorer by the loss of one of its noblest heroes. And that is enough. If it were possible to condone his desertion, the example he has bequeathed, the influence he exercises from beyond the grave, would make such condonation possible.

I have shown how up to a certain stage in Gordon's mission the Government had made his task doubly difficult by their refusal to carry out his recommendations; how by an obstinate resolve not to declare their policy, and not to send Zebehr Pasha for the establishment of a government at Khartoum, they had stumbled upon the necessity of an expedition for the relief of garrisons which he would otherwise have withdrawn, and how, by

reason of their obstinacy, their ruinous delays, and their unexampled desertion at the last, they had rendered themselves responsible for his death. This, it need hardly be noted, was not their opinion, nor the opinion of a portion of their henchmen. Votes of censure on the Ministry, for their conduct of affairs in the Soudan, were moved on the reassembling of Parliament. In the Commons the debate was feeble and spiritless, save for a few speeches—notably those of Mr. Gibson and Mr. Goschen. It presented little interest save to the student of parliamentary human nature—of the natural man that is, as modified by the operation of party politics. It was notorious that the Government had been guilty of one of those blunders which are more criminal than crime; it was suspected, as I have said, that their action had not been involuntary, nor its consequences wholly unconsidered or unweighed. On these two points the country was agreed; and on these two points the country was misrepresented by the House. The Premier, not content with sacrificing Gordon, dared to excuse, if not to praise himself; Sir William Harcourt, Sir Charles Dilke, and the Marquis of Hartington, went on to do likewise; and by a majority of fourteen the party re-affirmed its confidence in their capacity and its satisfaction with their practice of

affairs. In the Upper House the debate—save for a silly and halting discourse by Lord Northbrook—was remarkable in a better sense. Here the accuser was the Marquis of Salisbury. His speech, one of the best in all his career, was of those that carry conviction. Lord Granville had nothing of value or of weight to advance in reply; and the vote was carried by a very large majority. But the position remained unchanged. Nothing had happened save that there was one great Englishman the less. The Government refused to go out; and Mr. Gladstone, who by his personal authority had kept back the expedition for upwards of two months, and who to many people was as plainly responsible for Gordon's death as Faragh himself—Mr. Gladstone saw fit to remain at the head of affairs, to go on playing at statesmanship, and paving with good intentions as much of hell as, after fifty years of active political life, he had still left unrepaired.

The issue was a grave and melancholy comment on the condition of both England and the English. It revealed a new stage of development in the national character; it verified the cruellest sayings of our cruellest foes. To be personal and particular, it forced the reflection that had the English Envoy been a Cavendish or a Leveson-Gower, he would never have been abandoned; that had he stooped to

play the Ministerial game, and taken his mission not seriously, but as an appeal to the British voter, he would have been covered with honours and loaded with rewards.

For, indeed, the facts of the case are all too plain enough. The Ministry were at their wit's end what to do; Gordon was hurried off to Khartoum to appease the populace and do duty as an electioneering agent. When his employers found that the man they had chosen was not of those who sell their souls for place and profit, but, yielding to the pressure of events, persisted in his work as one to whom God is of more account than Mr. Schnadhorst, their anger and resentment knew no bounds. This is no theory of mine. It is the simple truth—a fact which, when the secret history of these times is brought to light, will be made dreadfully clear. True it is that there were members of the Cabinet who stood up in Council and urged the expediency of relief; but the Premier willed otherwise, and an expedition which had been advised as early as May was not sent out until October. Nor is this all. It remains to be told, after the Debate on the Vote of Censure in the summer, when it was made known that the Government refused to act, how a lady intimately known to me collected subscriptions to the amount of no less

than eighty thousand pounds for the equipment of a private expedition. In three several interviews with a certain Minister, she implored official sanction for her enterprise, and three times was she refused. Not only, therefore, did the Cabinet—or rather one section of the Cabinet—decline to save their Envoy's life themselves; they also declined to allow that work to be done by others. He had not followed their lead and deserted his post, and the loyal souls he had gathered about him. His morality was not their morality; his theory of right and justice and honour had nothing in common with theirs; and since he would have none of their devices, he must be left to his won. And left he was, till the nation grew impatient once more, and our rulers, with the ballot boxes full in view, equipped a force for his relief. It was a farce, and they knew it; but it kept them in office: it was excellent argument to the constituencies to vote straight at the coming elections, and it served its turn. Mr. Gladstone's faculty of self-delusion, as we have but too much reason to know, can only be qualified as exceptional. It is possible, therefore, that when, in the autumn of '84, he made his parade through Scotland for the exceeding good of his country, he knew not, or had forgotten, that he had betrayed his trust, and sacrificed her greatest son. It is certain that,

months afterwards, he received the news of Gordon's death with the equanimity of one who has done his best to avert the inevitable, and that he attributed the misfortune, not, of course, to himself, but to his victim's peculiar "temerity." On Gordon's part there were no such comfortable illusions. He died in utter scorn of the men who had betrayed him. "I will accept nothing from the Gladstone Government," he wrote in the late December of '84, "not even my expenses." It is almost the last word of his that it is given us to hear; and it will serve with history for the epitaph of Mr. Gladstone's reputation.

"Anyone whom God gives to be much in union with Him cannot even suffer a pang at death, for what is death to a believer?" Thus had Gordon written to his sister Augusta not long before the day of his passing. That he died in this belief, as he had lived in it, is the only comfortable circumstance in our bereavement.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

THE END.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

ACCORDING to an Austrian missionary, Father Dichtl. Mahomet Ahmet was born at Dongola, about 1840, and was tall, and of coppery red complexion. For a long time he worked with his two brothers in the neighbourhood of Khartoum at building boats for the Nile, but got tired of his trade and aspired to become a fakir, which is about the same thing as a priest. To this end he applied to the sheikh of an island close to Khartoum, and after a few years' study succeeded in taking the order of fakir. He then sought to become a sheikh, and was again successful. Thenceforth he had but one object in view, to assume the character of prophet. He retired to the Island of Abba, near Kana, on the White River, took up his abode in a dry cistern, and led the life of a sheikh. Here for six years he remained among sheikhs, with the exception of a weekly visit to the mosque. In course of time his reputation for piety spread throughout the land; and from a saint he became a saviour eloquently expounding his mission to a crowd of Moslems at Kana. He told them

that the Archangel Gabriel had twice commanded him to unsheath the sword of faith, in order to reform the bad Moslem and to found a Mussulman Empire, which would be followed by universal peace. He held his mission from the Prophet, and would achieve what Mahomed had been unable to do. He therefore urged them to follow him; he was the Mahdi, and would lead them to the kingdom founded by Allah for true believers. Abdel Kader, the ex-Governor-General of the Soudan, a man of high probity and ability, endeavoured by theological argument to convince the people that Mahomet Ahmet was an impostor, but to little purpose. Not only the lower classes, but also the Government officials and many officers secretly believed in the Mahdi's mission. Raouf Pasha, at the time he was Governor-General, sent an emissary to the False Prophet. Father Dichtl happened to be present when that emissary on his return gave the following account of his interview with the Mahdi:—"On arriving at Abba I found Mahomet Ahmet surrounded by five hundred or six hundred followers, all of them naked, with iron chain belts round their waists and broad drawn swords. The Mahdi occupied a raised seat in their midst, and in his right hand he held the Prophet's staff. When I asked him what his object was he described his pretended mission. I answered that the Government and myself were as good Mussulmans as he. But this he denied, on the grounds that we allowed the Christians to have churches of their own, that we afforded them protection, and that the Government levied taxes. I advised him to abandon his plans and to surrender,

adding that he could not resist a Government which disposed of soldiers, Remington rifles, guns, and steamers. To this he rejoined :—‘ If the soldiers fire upon me and my followers their bullets will not hurt us ; and if you advance against us with steamers they will sink with everything on board.’ ”

No. 2.

At a later date, when on his way to Khartoum, Gordon ascertained that the march lasted from the 10th Sept., to the 3rd Nov., or some forty days. During this interval the troops only succeeded in getting over ground which he had ridden over in four days. Owing to the intense heat the troops were probably greatly worn out. It would then seem that Hicks separated from Alaidin Pasha, but subsequently rejoined him and found him engaged with the enemy. In the confusion of the fight both parties would appear to have fired into each other. The Tribal cavalry then came down on them and crushed them.

No. 3.

FROM the *Pall Mall Gazette*, JAN. 9TH, 1884.

“ At present it is obviously out of the question to send an army to the relief of Colonel Coetlogon. Baker Pasha’s force seems inadequate even to relieve Sinkat. In common with the ex-Khedive, of whom he speaks with remarkable cordiality, General Gordon deprecates the despatch of either Indian or English troops to the Soudan. But if we have not an Egyptian army to employ in the service, and if we must not send an English force, what are we to do ? There is only one thing that we can do. We

cannot send a regiment to Khartoum, but we can send a man who on more than one occasion has proved himself more valuable in similar circumstances than an entire army. Why not send Chinese Gordon with full powers to Khartoum, to assume absolute control of the territory, to treat with the Mahdi, to relieve the garrisons, and do what can be done, to save what can be saved from the wreck in the Soudan? There is no necessity to speak of the pre-eminent qualifications which he possesses for the work. They are notorious, and are as undisputed as they are indisputable. His engagement on the Congo could surely be postponed. No one can deny the urgent need in the midst of that hideous welter of confusion for the presence of such a man, with a born genius for command, an unexampled capacity in organizing 'ever-victorious armies,' and a perfect knowledge of the Soudan and its people. Why not send him out with *carte blanche* to do the best that can be done? He may not be able single-handed to reduce that raging chaos to order, but the attempt is worth making, and if it is to be made it will have to be made at once. For before many days General Gordon will have left for the Congo, and the supreme opportunity may have passed by." This view was generally supported in the Press, irrespective of party, but for several days the Government made no sign.

No. 4.

MEMORANDUM BY GENERAL GORDON.

(Received February 1st, 1884.)

1. I understand that Her Majesty's Government have come to the irrevocable decision not to incur the very

APPENDIX.

onerous duty of securing to the peoples of the Soudan a just future government. That, as a consequence, Her Majesty's Government have determined to restore to these peoples their independence, and will no longer suffer the Egyptian Government to interfere with their affairs.

2. For this purpose, Her Majesty's Government have decided to send me to the Soudan to arrange for the evacuation of these countries, and the safe removal of the Egyptian employés and troops.

3. Keeping paragraph No. 1 in view, viz., that the evacuation of the Soudan is irrevocably decided on, it will depend on circumstances in what way this is to be accomplished.

My idea is that the restoration of the country should be made to the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest, and whose families still exist; that the Mahdi should be left altogether out of the calculation as regards the handing over the country; and that it should be optional with the Sultans to accept his supremacy or not. As these Sultans would probably not be likely to gain by accepting the Mahdi as their Sovereign, it is probable that they will hold to their independent positions. Thus we should have two factors to deal with, namely, the petty Sultans asserting their several independence, and the Mahdi's party aiming at supremacy over them. To hand, therefore, over to the Mahdi the arsenals, &c., would, I consider, be a mistake. They should be handed over to the Sultans of the States in which they are placed.

The most difficult question is how and to whom to

hand over the arsenals of Khartoum, Dongola, and Kassala, which towns have, so to say, no old standing families, Khartoum and Kassala having sprung up since Mehemet Ali's conquest. Probably it would be advisable to postpone any decision as to these towns till such time as the inhabitants have made known their opinion.

4. I have in paragraph 3 proposed the transfer of the lands to the local Sultans, and stated my opinion that these will not accept the supremacy of the Mahdi. If this is agreed to, and my supposition correct as to their action, there can be but little doubt that as far as he is able the Mahdi will endeavour to assert his rule over them, and will be opposed to any evacuation of the Government employés and troops. My opinion of the Mahdi's forces is, that the bulk of those who were with him at Obeid will refuse to cross the Nile, and that those who do so will not exceed 3,000 or 4,000 men, and also that these will be composed principally of black troops who have deserted, and who, if offered fair terms, would come over to the Government side. In such a case, viz., "Sultans accepting transfer of territory and refusing the supremacy of the Mahdi, and Mahdi's black troops coming over to the Government," resulting weakness of the Mahdi; what should be done should the Mahdi's adherents attack the evacuating columns? It cannot be supposed that these are to offer no resistance, and if in resisting they should obtain a success it would be but reasonable to allow them to follow up the Mahdi to such a position as would insure their future safe march. This is one of those difficult questions which our Government can hardly be expected

to answer, but which may arise, and to which I would call attention. Paragraph 1 fixes irrevocably the decision of the Government, viz., to evacuate the territory, and, of course, as far as possible involves the avoidance of any fighting. I can, therefore, only say that having in view paragraph 1, and seeing the difficulty of asking Her Majesty's Government to give a decision or direction as to what should be done in certain cases, that I will carry out the evacuation as far as possible according to their wish to the best of my ability, and with avoidance, as far as possible, of all fighting. I would, however, hope that Her Majesty's Government will give me their support and consideration should I be unable to fulfil all their expectations.

5. Though it is out of my province to give any opinion as to the action of Her Majesty's Government in leaving the Soudan, still I must say it would be an iniquity to reconquer these peoples and then hand them back to the Egyptians without guarantees of future good government. It is evident that this we cannot secure them without an inordinate expenditure of men and money. The Soudan is a useless possession, ever was so, and ever will be so. Larger than Germany, France, and Spain together, and mostly barren, it cannot be governed except by a Dictator who may be good or bad. If bad he will cause constant revolts. No one who has ever lived in the Soudan can escape the reflection, "What a useless possession is this land!" Few men, also, can stand its fearful monotony and deadly climate.

6. Saïd Pasha, the Viceroy before Ismail, went up to

the Soudan with Count F. de Lesseps. He was so discouraged and horrified at the misery of the people that at Berber Count de Lesseps saw him throw his guns into the river, declaring that he would be no party to such oppression. It was only after the urgent solicitations of European Consuls and others that he reconsidered his decision. Therefore, I think Her Majesty's Government are fully justified in recommending the evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary towards securing a good government would be far too onerous to admit of such an attempt being made. Indeed, one may say it is impracticable at any cost. Her Majesty's Government will now leave them as God has placed them; they are not forced to fight among themselves, and they will no longer be oppressed by men coming from lands so remote as Circassia, Kurdistan, and Anatolia.

7. I have requested Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart to write his views independent of mine on this subject. I append them to this Report.

(Signed) C. G. GORDON, *Major-General*.

Steam-ship "Tanjore," at Sea January 22nd, 1884.

OBSERVATIONS BY COLONEL STEWART.

1. I have carefully read over General Gordon's observations, and cordially agree with what he states.

2. I would, however, suggest that, as far as possible, all munitions of war be destroyed on evacuation.

3. I quite agree with General Gordon that the Soudan is an expensive and useless possession. No one who has

visited it can escape the reflection: "What a useless possession is this land, and what a huge encumbrance on Egypt!"

4. Handing back the territories to the families of the dispossessed Sultans is an act of justice both towards them and their people. The latter, at any rate, will no longer be at the mercy of foreign mercenaries, and if they are tyrannized over, it will be more or less their own fault. Handing back the districts to the old reigning families is also a politic act, as raising up a rival power to that of the Mahdi.

5. As it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to foresee all the eventualities that may arise during the evacuation, it seems to me as the more judicious course to rely on the discretion of General Gordon and his knowledge of the country.

6. I, of course, understand that General Gordon is going to the Soudan with full powers to make all arrangements as to its evacuation, and that he is in no way to be interfered with by the Cairo Ministers. Also that any suggestions or remarks that the Cairo Government would wish to make are to be made directly to him and Her Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary, and that no intrigues are to be permitted against his authority. Any other course would, I am persuaded, make his mission a failure.

(Signed) D. H. STEWART,

Lieutenant-Colonel, 11th Hussars.

Steam-ship "Tanjore," at Sea, January 22nd, 1884.

APPENDIX.

x

No. 4A.

MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

(Extract).

Abu Hamed, February 8th, 1884.

I have the honour to state that, from the various telegrams soliciting appointments and from other signs of confidence in the Government, it is evident that the country is far less disturbed than has been reported, and that very probably the mass of civil employés will refuse to leave the Soudan, even if dismissed, and their expenses paid to Cairo.

Both with a view to eventual evacuation and also to economy, it will be absolutely necessary to reduce all establishments to a minimum, and should the dismissed employés refuse to leave the country, I propose making them sign a paper releasing the Egyptian Government from all future responsibility on their behalf.

I consider that on my arrival at Khartoum my first object should be to send to Cairo the families of all deceased employés, soldiers, &c., and to attempt the pacification of the country, and the reopening of the communications. When these objects are fulfilled, I would wish your Excellency to consider what is to follow.

You are aware that a regular system of posts and telegraphs exists; legal Courts, financial and other Departments are established, and that, in short, the country has, during a considerable time, been accustomed to a more or less controlling and directing government.

To disturb, if not annihilate, this system at a moment's notice would appear to me to hand over the country to complete anarchy. Consider what the situation will be.

Let it be supposed that the Soudan, or at least the Eastern Soudan, is tranquillized, its administration "Soudanized," native Mudirs appointed, refugees all sent to Cairo, the Equatorial and Bahr-Gazelle Provinces evacuated, and the Egyptian troops ready to leave. Suppose that the firman dissolving the connection between Egypt and the Soudan is read, and the result will inevitably be that each Mudir will aim at securing his own independence, and that a period of violent and protracted commotion will ensue, which may very possibly react prejudicially on Egypt, owing to the intimate connection which has for so long obtained between the two countries.

Hence I would suggest that the Government of Egypt should continue to maintain its position as a suzerain Power, nominate the Governor-General and Mudirs, and act as a Supreme Court of Appeal.

Its controlling influence should, however, be a strictly moral one, and limited to giving advice.

In spite of all that has occurred, I feel satisfied that the prestige of the Cairo Government, except in so far as the conduct of its troops in the field is concerned, is not seriously shaken, and that the people still continue to look up to the Cairo Government as the direct representative of the Sultan as Khalif, and would look with horror on a complete separation.

Should a nominal control, such as I advise, be maintained, it is evident that it could in no way involve the Egyptian Government, and that the prestige which the Governors, Mudirs, &c., would acquire from being nominated by Cairo would most probably secure them against

rivals. On the other hand, in the event of the Mudir becoming unpopular, an order for his removal from Cairo would carry great weight, and most probably insure his dismissal.

I would therefore earnestly beg that evacuation, but not abandonment, be the programme to be followed, and that the firman with which I am provided be changed into one recognising moral control and suzerainty.

In offering this suggestion, I must, however, premise that the moral control will be exercised by the Egyptian Government as a responsible body, and that all nominations will be made by the Ministry uninfluenced by any individual, however exalted may be his position.

I am persuaded that, by following the above policy on the lines I have drawn, neither Her Majesty's Government nor yet the Egyptian Government would incur any risk, and that they would be able to secure, in a greater or lesser degree, the future of the Soudan.

COLONEL STEWART'S REMARKS ON MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON'S
DESPATCH OF FEBRUARY 8, 1884, TO SIR E. BARING.

Although it cannot be denied that anarchy and bloodshed would ensue were the policy of abandonment carried out in its entirety, still I think a solution in the direction as pointed out by General Gordon will altogether depend upon what policy Her Majesty's Government intend to pursue towards Egypt.

Should they decide to evacuate Egypt, and to cease

having a controlling and directing voice in the affairs of that country, then I am decidedly of opinion that it would be far better, in the interests of both countries, to abandon the Soudan. To allow in such a case Egypt to maintain even a nominal control over the Soudan would only tend to insure further attempts at active interference with their accompaniment of misgovernment, oppression, venality, and Cairene intrigue.

In the event of Her Majesty's Government retaining a directing voice in Egyptian affairs, then I think that General Gordon's advice might be followed with considerable advantage.

Although I do not quite agree with him that the prestige of Cairo has not been greatly diminished, still I think sufficient of it remains to enable the Egyptian Government to exert a beneficial influence towards curbing the forces of disorder in the Soudan. Whether, or for how long, such an influence may last, it is impossible to say. Probably, in time, unless the Egyptian Government takes a more active part in the government of the country than that of giving advice, and the appointing and removing Mudirs at the request of the people, it will gradually wane and wear out; but, at any rate for some time to come, it will probably be strong enough to act usefully as a moral support to the Soudanese Government, and to diminish the extent of the change.

(Signed) D. H. STEWART,

Lieutenant-Colonel, 11th Hussars.

Abu Hamed, February 8th, 1884.

No. 5.

PROCLAMATIONS ISSUED BY MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON.

Know ye that I have come to extricate the Soudan from the difficulties and complications which have befallen it, to establish tranquillity and prevent the shedding of Moslem blood, to secure to the inhabitants their prosperity, children, and wives, and to put a stop to injustice and oppression, which have been the cause of this rebellion.

I have therefore wiped off all arrears due from you to the end of 1883 ; I have reduced to one-half the taxes due for 1884, as well as of all taxes introduced by Raouf Pasha, and have put a stop to injustice in order that matters may progress and that you may attend to your avocations and increase the prosperity of the country by the spread of agriculture and commerce. I also give you the right to keep the slaves in your service without any interference from the Government or anybody else. You should live in peace ; do not expose yourself to perdition ; and avoid following the Devil's path. Warn the inhabitants, and reveal to them the good news, in order that they may walk in the path of righteousness, and turn away from the Evil One.

Whoever wishes to see me, let him come and dread nothing.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

(Translation.)

Whereas my sincerest desire is to adopt a course of action which shall lead to the public tranquillity, and being aware with what regret you have regarded the

severe and stringent measures which have been taken by the Government for the suppression of the traffic, and the seizure and punishment of all concerned in the Slave Trade, as provided by the Convention and by the Decrees, I therefore confer upon you these rights : that henceforth no one shall interfere with your property ; that whoever has slaves in his service shall have full right to their services, and full control over them, without any interference whatsoever.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

(Translation.)

My main object being the prosperity of the inhabitants and the reduction of the taxes which they are at present unable to meet, I have considered it wise to abandon half the taxes, and only one half will be levied from this day forward. Also the taxes due to the end of 1883 will be wiped off, owing to your inability to pay them. I will burn the registers as an act of clemency. I have also pardoned your former misdeeds. The inhabitants should therefore be warned accordingly, and should be informed that I abhor war, which causes bloodshed. My sole desire is that the inhabitants should live in peace and enjoy their property and agriculture under the auspices of the Khedive.

(L.S.) GORDON.

(Translation.)

To all the Inhabitants and Merchants,

Inasmuch as commercial transactions in Soudan goods within the Soudan is not prohibited, whether exported to the western provinces, such as Kordofan, Darfour, or

other places, if any one wishes to import or export any goods the Government will not prevent him from so doing or interfere in any way with his trade.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

(Translation.)

To all the Employés,

From this day forward do not petition me for increase of salary on that which is allowed to you, because having foregone half the taxes due by the natives, which reduces the revenue, circumstances will not allow increase in the expenditure.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

(Translation.)

To all the Notables and Inhabitants in the Soudan,

Let it be known to you all that I have been appointed in concert between the Khedive's Government and the Government of Great Britain, Governor-General of the whole Soudan, and the Soudan has now become an independent State to govern itself without the intervention of the Egyptian Government in any way whatever. The Mudirs and Governors have been informed accordingly.

I am now ready to see to your prosperity and good government, and endow you with the privileges which were granted to you by the late Saïd Pasha. It should be known to you that the Sultan had the intention of sending an expedition of strong Turkish troops to subdue the rebellious provinces, but his knowledge of your condition and of my kindness to you during the four years I was Governor-General of the Soudan has prevented him

from sending such an expedition, and I have come in person, by the will of God, to prevent war between the Moslems and the shedding of blood, which is contrary to the will of God, his Prophet, and his Saints.

Know ye that I propose to convene a Council composed of the Kings and Notables of the Soudan, and I have ordered that you be governed by natives of the Soudan, in order that you may not be deprived of your rights as heretofore. I have wiped off all taxes due from you up to the end of the year 1888, and reduced by half those due for 1884. My main object in doing so is to give you prosperity. Justice is the basis of good government.

The Council in question will meet twice a week, and as often as emergency may require. You are pardoned. My words are true, and God is my witness.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

(Translation.)

JUSTICE IS THE FOUNDATION OF GOVERNMENT.

PRESIDENT :

Hussein Pasha Khalifa.

MEMBERS :

Mohamed Effendi El Tahir.

Mohamed Effendy Abu Hagal.

Abdul Megid Effendy.

Moustapha Effendy Abu Beya.

Mohamed Effendy Hasen El Mouss.

Suleiman Aga Mohamed Aly Gamr.

Sheikh Bashiry Moussa.

Sheikh Naman Suleiman Kamar, Notable of Wady Kamar.

Sheikh Ahmed El Garby, Councillor of the Council.

Sheikh Mohamed Ahmed Hashim, Director of School.

Ameen Aga Ahmed El Magzoub.

PROCLAMATION.

To all the Notables, Sheikhs, and Inhabitants of Berber,

I have to inform you that I have been appointed Governor-General of the Soudan with the consent of the Khedive's Government and that of Great Britain. The Soudan is now an independent Government to govern itself without the intervention in any way of the Egyptian Government. Instructions have accordingly been given to all the Mudirs and Governors. I am now ready to do what is necessary for your tranquillity and prosperity, and the spread of confidence amongst you. I will grant you the privileges accorded to you by the late Saïd Pasha. I have also to inform you that it was the intention of His Majesty the Sultan to send an expedition of Turkish troops to subdue to rebellious provinces, but knowing your condition and my clemency towards you when I was for four years Governor-General of the Soudan, I prevented the dispatch of this expedition at present, and have come in person praying God to prevent war between Moslems, as the shedding of blood is contrary to God's will and the Prophet's.

Let it be known to all of you that a Council composed of the Kings and Notables of Berber whose names are given above will be held under the presidency of Hussein

Pasha Khalifa, Governor-General of Dongola and Berber. I have also directed that the Governors of the Soudan should be of Soudanese origin, for the greater tranquillity of the natives, so that you can have no cause of complaint from injustice as before.

I have wiped off all the arrears due from you to the end of 1883 as well as one half of what is due from you for the year 1884. This I have done for your prosperity, and for the spread of justice amongst you, which is the foundation of good government.

The Council in question will meet in the Moudirieh twice a week under the presidency of Hussein Pasha Khalifa. The Council will also be convoked in cases of emergency by order of the Governor-General. Be assured my words are true, and God is my witness.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

February 13th, 1884.

PRESIDENT:

His Excellency Awad El Kerim Pasha Abu Siu, Mudir of Khartoum.

MEMBERS:

His Excellency Mohamed Hassan Pasha, Minister of Finance.

His Excellency Saïd Pasha Hussein, Commandant of the Bashi-Bazouks.

Hassan Bey Mohamed Ibrahim.

Suleiman Aga Walad El Mak.

Hadj Nassir Abou Hassiss.

Babakr Effendy El Garkouk.

Sheikh El Ameen.

Sheikh El Uslam.

Saïd Hussein El Magdy, Head Master, Cadi of Khartoum.

Sheikh Moussa, the Moufti.

Sheikh Abdul Kadir, Cadi of Kalakila.

To all the Inhabitants, Notables, Sheikhs of Khartoum,

Having been appointed Governor-General of the Soudan, with the consent of the Khedive's Government and that of Great Britain and the Government of the Soudan, having become independent, to govern itself without the intervention in any way of the Egyptian Government, and I am ready to see to your prosperity and the spread of security amongst you, and the grant to you of the privileges accorded to you by the late Saïd Pasha. I have now to inform you that it was the intention of His Majesty the Sultan to send an expedition of Turkish troops to subdue the rebellious provinces, but knowing your condition and my mercy towards you when I was four years ago Governor-General of the Soudan, I prevented the dispatch of this expedition for the present, and I have come in person, praying God to prevent war between Moslems.

A Council has been composed of the Notables, whose names are stated above, to try and settle the differences at present existing in the Mouidrieh. The Council is under the presidency of his Excellency Awad El Kerim Abou Siu, Mudir of Khartoum, and I have ordered that the Governors of the Soudan should be named from

amongst you for your security and tranquillity, and in order that you may have no cause of complaint against arbitrary rule and the usurpation of your property, as was formerly the case, I have wiped off all the arrears due from you to the end of 1883, together with one-half of the taxes due for the year 1884, and I have burned the old registers. The Council will be convoked twice a week to look into the state of affairs, and settle differences existing, and the Council will be convened in cases of emergency.

(L.S.) GORDON,

Governor-General of the Soudan.

February 19th, 1884.

No. 6.

MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

Khartoum, February 18th, 1884.

In a previous Memorandum I alluded to the arrival of an epoch when whites, fellaheen, troops, civilian employés, women and children of deceased soldiers—in short, the Egyptian element in the Soudan—will be removed; when we shall be face to face with the Soudan administration, and when I must withdraw from the Soudan. I have stated that to withdraw without being able to place a successor in my seat would be the signal for general anarchy throughout the country, *which, though all Egyptian element was withdrawn, would be a misfortune, and inhuman.*

Also, I have stated that even if I placed a man in my seat unsupported by any Government, the same anarchy would ensue.

Her Majesty's Government could, I think, without responsibility in money or men, give the Commission to my successor on certain terms which I will detail hereafter. If this solution is examined, we shall find that a somewhat analogous case exists in Afghanistan, where Her Majesty's Government give moral support to the Ameer, and go even beyond that in giving the Ameer a subsidy which would not be needed in the present case.

I distinctly state that if Her Majesty's Government gave a Commission to my successor, I recommend neither a subsidy nor men being given. I would select and give a Commission to some man, and promise him the moral support of Her Majesty's Government and nothing more.

It may be argued that Her Majesty's Government would thus be giving nominal and moral support to a man who will rule over a Slave State, but so is Afghanistan, as also Socotra.

This nomination of my successor must, I think, be direct from Her Majesty's Government.

As for the man, Her Majesty's Government should select one above all others, namely, Zebehr. He alone has the ability to rule the Soudan, and would be universally accepted by the Soudan. He should be made K.C.M.G., and given presents. The terms of nomination should be as follows:—

1. Engagement not to go into Equatorial or Bahr-Ghazelle Provinces, and which I should evacuate.
2. Engagement not to go into Darfour.
3. Engagement, on payment of £200 annually, to telegraph height of Nile to Cairo.

4. Engagement to remain at peace with Abyssinia.
5. Engagement not to levy duties beyond 4 per cent. on imports or exports. Of course he will not have Suakin or Massowah.

6. Engagement not to pursue anyone who was engaged in suppressing his son's revolt.

7. Engagement to pay the pensions granted by the Egyptian Government to old employés.

To the above may be added other clauses as may seem fit.

P.S.—I think the decision of any Council of Notables for the selection of candidates for the post of my successor would be useless.

Zebehr's exile at Cairo for ten years, amidst all the late events, and his mixing with Europeans, must have had great effect on his character. Zebehr's nomination, under the moral countenance of Her Majesty's Government, would bring all merchants, European and others, back to the Soudan in a short time.

Despatch as above by post.

I have asked Stewart to give his opinions independently of mine, in order to prevent a one-sided view.

He is a first-rate man.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL STEWART TO SIR E. BARING.

Khartoum, February 18th, 1884.

With reference to Gordon's telegram of to-day, I think that the policy he urges would greatly facilitate our retirement from the country.

The Turco-Arabian view of the question I would suggest

as one demanding serious consideration. As to whether Zebehr Pasha is the man who should be nominated, I think we have hardly yet a sufficient knowledge of the country to be able to form an opinion. It is, however, probable whoever is nominated will be accepted for a time.

SIR E. BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

My Lord,

Cairo, February 19th, 1884.

With reference to my despatch of this day's date, I have the honour to submit to your Lordship my views upon General Gordon's proposals.

As regards the choice of his successor, there is, as Colonel Stewart says in his telegram, no necessity to decide at once, but I believe Zebehr Pasha to be the only possible man. He undoubtedly possesses energy and ability, and has great local influence.

As regards the Slave Trade, I discussed the matter with General Gordon when he was in Cairo, and he fully agreed with me in thinking that Zebehr Pasha's presence or absence would not affect the question in one way or the other. I am also convinced from many things that have come to my notice that General Gordon is quite right in thinking that Zebehr Pasha's residence in Egypt has considerably modified his character. He now understands what European power is, and it is much better to have to deal with a man of this sort than with a man like the Mahdi.

I should be altogether opposed to having General Gordon and Zebehr Pasha at Khartoum together. As

soon as General Gordon has arranged for the withdrawal of the garrison and the rest of the Egyptian element, he could leave Khartoum, and Zebehr Pasha might shortly afterwards start from Cairo. One of my chief reasons for allowing the interview between the two men to take place was that I wished to satisfy myself to some extent of the sentiments entertained by Zebehr Pasha towards General Gordon. I would not on any account run the risk of putting General Gordon in his power.

If Zebehr Pasha is nominated, it will be very necessary to lay down in writing and in the plainest language what degree of support he may expect from Her Majesty's Government. I cannot recommend that he should be promised the "moral support" of Her Majesty's Government. In the first place, he would scarcely understand the sense of the phrase, and, moreover, I do not think he would attach importance to any support which was not material. It is for Her Majesty's Government to judge what the effect of his appointment would be upon public opinion in England, but except for that I can see no reason why Zebehr Pasha should not be proclaimed Ruler of the Soudan with the approbation of Her Majesty's Government. It should be distinctly explained to him in writing that he must rely solely upon his own resources to maintain his position. He might receive a moderate sum of money from the Egyptian Government to begin with. His communications with that Government might be conducted through Her Majesty's Representative in Cairo, as General Gordon suggests.

With regard to the detailed conditions mentioned by General Gordon, I think they might form the subject of further consideration and discussion, both with General Gordon and with others in authority here. I am inclined to doubt whether such conditions would be of any use; they would probably not long be observed.

In conclusion, I may add that I have no idea whether Zebehr Pasha would accept the position which it is proposed to offer him.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) E. BARING.

No. 7.

SIR E. BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

Cairo, February 27th, 1884, 3.30 P.M.

Gordon has issued following Proclamation to inhabitants of Soudan:—

“Since my arrival I have constantly assured you of good treatment and justice, and advised you to desist from rebellion which leads to war and bloodshed; but finding that this advice had no effect on some people, I have been compelled to use severe measures, so much so that British troops are now on their way, and in a few days will reach Khartoum; then, whoever persists in bad conduct will be treated as he deserves. Therefore upright men should have no intercourse with rebels, or they will share the same fate. I am watching things closely, and you should not think I am ignorant of what goes on. The present rebellion will bring ruin on a country and much loss of life. The wise man is his own guardian.”

No. 8.

MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

Khartoum February 24th, 1884.

It is quite possible that in a short time the whole Soudan, comprising Dongola, Berber, Khartoum, Senaar, Kassala will be quieted, and Bogos evacuated. This will leave us with a large and expensive force with a diminished revenue, as hardly even the half of the tax is likely to be realized for a year or so. We will allow that all Egyptian employes have left, and also the white troops; what are we next to do? We will not have funds to pay the forces requisite for the defence of the towns mentioned for longer than the allowance of the £100,000 lasts. Then comes a deadlock. To this question I can offer no solution. It is obvious that not the least self-reliant spirit exists among the wealthy people of the towns, and that nothing can be expected of them. The difficulty above alluded to, viz., how to pay for the Soudan garrisons of these towns, is one which, whoever may be named Governor, must face. How he is to do so without funds I do not see. I can only see a slight hope against anarchy, which is this, namely, to place 1,000 Soudan troops in Khartoum, 500 ditto in Berber, 500 ditto in Dongola, 500 ditto in Kassala, 500 ditto in Senaar. Total 3,000, and costing about £70,000 a-year. I would then place in each town a Governor and a Meglis, and hand over to him the whole administration of taxes and of government. I would keep the £70,000 a year apart for the payment of the 3,000 men, and I would place a supreme officer over them. By this means anarchy would

be prevented, at any rate for a time, and if it did occur it would be the fault of the native government. Should an outbreak occur, as the troops will be natives, there would be no chance of their being massacred; the only risk would be for the European commander. The question therefore is now before you. Do you approve this scheme, can you find the £70,000, or will you suggest some other? It is a most serious matter when one considers the state of the people of these towns. It must be remembered that revenue is taken by the separation from the Soudan of Suakin and Massowah and customs duties now taken at Suez.

No. 9.

SIR E. BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

(Received by telegraph February 28th.)

My Lord,

Cairo, February 28th, 1884.

I communicated to General Gordon your Lordship's telegram of the 22nd instant, asking him at the same time whether he could suggest anyone besides Zebehr Pasha to succeed him at Khartoum.

I have the honour to inclose copy of my telegram to General Gordon on the subject, and of his reply. I also forward herewith another telegram from General Gordon, in the course of which he recommends that 3,000 black troops should be kept in the Soudan, and that the cost of their maintenance, which he estimates at £70,000 a year, should be defrayed by the Egyptian Government.

Besides these telegrams, I have before me a Report addressed to me by General Gordon from Abou-Hamad on

the 8th instant, a copy of which was forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch of the 25th instant. Your Lordship will observe that this Report is dated ten days before his long telegram respecting the future government of the Soudan, which will be found in my despatch of the 18th instant.

I will now submit to your Lordship my views upon the main points at issue, after having carefully considered the different proposals made by General Gordon. There are obviously many contradictions in those proposals; too much importance should not be attached to the details. But I venture to again recommend to the earnest attention of Her Majesty's Government the serious question of principle which General Gordon has raised.

Two alternative courses may be adopted. One is to evacuate the Soudan entirely, and to make no attempt to establish any settled government there before leaving; the other to make every effort of which the present circumstances admit to set up some settled form of government to replace the former Egyptian Administration.

General Gordon is evidently in favour of the latter of these courses. I entirely agree with him. The attempt, it is true, may not be successful, but I am strongly of opinion that it should be made. From every point of view, whether political, military, or financial, it will be a most serious matter if complete anarchy is allowed to reign south of Wadi Halfa. And this anarchy will inevitably ensue on General Gordon's departure, unless some measures are adopted beforehand to prevent it.

With regard to the wish of Her Majesty's Government not to go beyond General Gordon's plan, as stated in his Memorandum of the 22nd ultimo, I would remark that he appears to have intended merely to give a preliminary sketch of the general line of policy to be pursued. Moreover, in that Memorandum he makes a specific allusion to the difficulty of providing rulers for Khartoum, Dongola, and other places where there are no old families to recall to power.

It is clear that Her Majesty's Government cannot afford moral or material support to General Gordon's successor as Ruler of the Soudan, but the question of whether or not he should be nominally appointed by the authority of Her Majesty's Government appears to me to be one of very slight practical importance.

Whatever may be said to the contrary, Her Majesty's Government must in reality be responsible for any arrangements which are now devised for the Soudan, and I do not think it is possible to shake off that responsibility.

If, however, Her Majesty's Government are unwilling to assume any responsibility in the matter, then I think they should give full liberty of action to General Gordon and the Khedive's Government to do what seems best to them.

No. 10.

EARL GRANVILLE TO SIR E. BARING.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 29th, 1884.

The arguments advanced by General Gordon and yourself in favour of the appointment of Zebehr Pasha as Governor-General of the Soudan are under the considera-

tion of Her Majesty's Government; and I have to point out to you the principal grounds upon which they apprehend danger from such an appointment.

In the first place, it would appear not unlikely that he might, either by allying himself with the Mahdi, with whom he is already supposed to have some connection, or in some other manner, become himself a source of increased danger to Egypt from the Soudan, instead of a security against them.

Secondly, his reputation as a slave-trader and the absence of any reason for supposing that he would find in his new position an object of ambition sufficient to induce him to give assurances in the fulfilment of which reliance could be placed, might raise grave doubts as to whether his power and influence after his appointment would be used for the prevention or, at all events, for the discouragement of the Slave Trade.

In the third place, it is impossible to overlook the danger in which General Gordon might be placed, owing to Zebehr Pasha's hatred of that officer, if they should both be in the same region at a time when Zebehr had the supreme control.

I shall be glad to receive your observations upon these points.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 11.

MAJOR-GENERAL GORDON TO SIR E. BARING.

(Telegraphic.)

Khartoum, March 8th, 1884.

The sending of Zebehr means the extrication of the

Cairo employés from Khartoum, and the garrisons from Senaar and Kassala.

I can see no possible way to do so except through him, who, being a native of the country, can rally the well-affected around him, as they know he will make his home here.

I do not think that the giving a subsidy to Zebehr for some two years would be in contradiction to the policy of entire evacuation.

It would be nothing more than giving him a lump sum in two instalments under the conditions I have already written.

As for slave-holding, even had we held the Soudan, we could never have interfered with it.

I have already said that the Treaty of 1877 was an impossible one, therefore, on that head, Zebehr's appointment would make no difference whatever.

As for slave-hunting, the evacuation of the Bahr-Gazelle and Equatorial provinces would entirely prevent it.

Should Zebehr attempt, after his two years' subsidy was paid him, to take those districts, we could put pressure on him at Suakin, which will remain in our hands.

I feel sure that Zebehr will be so occupied with the Soudan proper, and with consolidating his position, that he will not have time to devote to those provinces.

As for the security of Egypt, Zebehr's stay in Cairo has taught him our power, and he would never dream of doing anything against Egypt. He would rather seek its closest alliance, for he is a great trader.

As to progress made in extrication of garrisons, all I

have done is to send down from Khartoum all the sick men, women, and children of those killed in Kordofan.

Senaar, I heard to-day, is quite safe and quiet.

Kassala will hold out without difficulty after Graham's victory, but the road there is blocked, as also is the road to Senaar.

It is quite impossible to get the roads open to Kassala and Senaar, or to send down the white troops, unless Zebehr comes up.

He will change whole state of affairs.

As for the Equatorial and Bahr-Gazelle provinces, they are all right, but I cannot evacuate them till the Nile rises, in two months.

Dongola and Berber are quiet; but I fear for the road between Berber and Khartoum, where the friends of the Mahdi are very active.

A body of rebels on the Blue Nile are blockading a force of 1,000 men, which have, however, plenty of food; till the Nile rises I cannot relieve them.

Darfour, so far as I can understand, is all right, and the restored Sultan should be now working up the tribes to acknowledge him.

It is impossible to find any other man but Zebehr for governing Khartoum. No one has his power. Hussein Pasha Khaleefa has only power at Dongola and Berber.

If you do not send Zebehr you have no chance of getting the garrisons away; this is a heavy argument in favour of sending him.

There is no possibility of dividing the country between Zebehr and other Chiefs; none of the latter could stand

for a day against the Mahdi's agents, and Hussein Pasha Khaleefa would also fall.

The Chiefs will not collect here, for the loyal are defending their lands against the disloyal.

There is not the least chance of Zebehr making common cause with the Mahdi. Zebehr here would be far more powerful than the Mahdi, and he would make short work of the Mahdi.

The Mahdi's power is that of a Pope, Zebehr's will be that of a Sultan. They could never combine.

Zebehr is fifty times the Mahdi's match. He is also of good family, well known and fitted to be Sultan; the Mahdi, in all these respects, is the exact opposite, besides being a fanatic.

I dare say Zebehr, who hates the tribes, did stir up the fires of revolt, in hopes that he would be sent to quell it.

It is the irony of fate that he will get his wish if he is sent up.

SIR E. BAEING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

(Received by telegraph, March 9th.)

(Extract.)

Cairo, March 9th, 1884.

Having forwarded to your Lordship General Gordon's reply to your telegram of the 5th instant, I have now the honour to submit my own views upon the points raised therein.

I think that the policy of sending Zebehr Pasha to Khartoum and giving him a subsidy is in harmony with

the policy of evacuation. It is in principle the same policy as that adopted by the Government of India towards Afghanistan and the tribes on the north-west frontier. I have always contemplated making some arrangements for the future government of the Soudan, as will be seen from my despatch of the 22nd December, 1883, in which I said that it would be "necessary to send an English officer of high authority to Khartoum with full powers to withdraw all garrisons in the Soudan and make the best arrangements possible for the future government of that country."

As regards slavery, it may certainly receive a stimulus from the abandonment of the Soudan by Egypt, but the dispatch of Zebehr Pasha to Khartoum will not affect the question in one way or the other. No middle course is possible as far as the Soudan is concerned. We must either virtually annex the country, which is out of the question, or else we must accept the inevitable consequences of the policy of abandonment.

Your Lordship will see what General Gordon says about the question of the security of Egypt. I believe that Zebehr Pasha may be made a bulwark against the approach of the Mahdi. Of course there is a risk that he will constitute a danger to Egypt, but this risk is, I think, a small one, and it is in any case preferable to incur it rather than to face the certain disadvantages of withdrawing without making any provision for the future government of the country, which would thus be sure to fall under the power of the Mahdi.

No. 12.

SIR E. BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

*(Received April 16th, 5.30 P.M.)**(Telegraphic.) Cairo, April 16th, 1884, 5.30 P.M.*

Urgent demands for aid continue to come from Berber. Inhabitants of Berber have telegraphed to Egyptian Government earnestly begging for assistance. Governor of Berber says that some people are kept loyal on account of frequent rumours that English troops are coming from Suakin, but that if these rumours turn out to be false, the Bedouins who are about to be sent to him will not constitute a force sufficient to enable him to maintain his position.

SIR E. BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

*(Received April 20th, 5 P.M.)**(Telegraphic.) Cairo, April 20th, 1884, 2 P.M.*

Hassan Khalifa telegrams that Bishareen are ready to join rebels, and that he fears that in two days Berber will be surrounded. He also confirms the news that the garrison of Shendy is surrounded at Aliab.

Nubar Pasha has sent me his telegram with a semi-official note, in which he says that the conduct of the retreat from the Soudan having been taken in hand by Her Majesty's Government, the Council of Ministers requested him to ask me what answer shall be sent. The matter is serious. Please send early reply. Unless some prospect of help can be held out to Hassan Khalifa there is some risk that he will be thrown into the arms of the rebels. This would seriously affect Gordon's position.

SIR E. BARING TO EARL GRANVILLE.

(Received April 20th, 5.40 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.) Cairo, April 20th, 1884, 5.20 P.M.

There is a panic at Berber. Every one who can do so is leaving. If any message is to go to General Gordon, it should be sent at once. The telegraph clerks at Berber want to leave, and it will be difficult to keep them to their post.

No. 13.

EARL GRANVILLE TO SIR E. BARING.

Sir, Foreign Office, March 28th, 1884.

It is desirable that I should explain at greater length than is possible in telegraphic despatches the reasons which have influenced Her Majesty's Government in declining to sanction the proposals made to them by General Gordon with your support, that Zebehr Pasha should be dispatched to assist him at Khartoum, and to succeed him there as Governor.

For this purpose it is necessary to advert shortly to the previous history of Zebehr Pasha, which is to be found in the account of General Gordon's proceedings in Central Africa, written by Dr. Birkbeck Hill in 1881, and in the journals of General Gordon published in that volume. Zebehr was a kind of king of the slave-hunters who devastated the countries bordering the White Nile. His Court, his wealth, his troops of slaves, and his fortified stations were graphically described by Dr. Schweinfurt. In 1869 the Khedive Ismail made an ineffectual effort to curb his power, and he was subsequently employed to

conquer the Kingdom of Darfour. Zebehr next claimed the appointment of Governor-General of the Soudan; but he was induced to visit Cairo, where he was detained, and has since remained under surveillance.

When General Gordon was Governor-General of the Soudan, Zebehr's son Suleiman was at Shaka with his father's forces, some 10,000 strong, consisting of murderers and robbers, who made raids upon the negro tribes for slaves. General Gordon tried to dissolve these forces by peaceful means, and succeeded for a time; but in 1878 Suleiman raised a formidable insurrection, which was put down by Gessi Pasha with great difficulty, under the instructions of General Gordon, who tried and executed the emissaries sent to him by Suleiman, among whom was Zebehr's chief secretary. Suleiman himself was captured and executed by Gessi in July, 1879, an action which General Gordon subsequently approved.

The language of General Gordon as to the power of Zebehr and his responsibility for the worst abuses of the Slave Trade is clear and decided. "Zebehr," he says, "alone is responsible for the Slave Trade of the last ten years," and he notices with indignation a proposal made to him from Cairo in 1879, that Zebehr should be sent back to the Soudan.

Such being the antecedents of Zebehr, it is not surprising that when General Gordon accepted the mission to proceed to Khartoum one of his first requests should have been that Zebehr should be carefully watched. Chérif Pasha had proposed to employ him at Suakin, and General Gordon, in a Memorandum of the 22nd January,

written on his voyage to Alexandria, expressed the following opinion in respect to his employment :—

“My objection to Zebehr is this. He is a first-rate General, and a man of great capacity, and he would in no time eat up all the petty Sultans and consolidate a vast State, as his ambition is boundless. I would therefore wish him kept away, as his restoration would be not alone unjust, but might open up the Turco-Arabic question. Left independent the Sultans will doubtless fight among themselves, and one will try to annex the other ; but with Zebehr it would be an easy task to overcome these different States and form a large independent one.”

Colonel Stewart observed upon the same subject :—

“Zebehr’s return would undoubtedly be a misfortune to the Soudanese, and also a direct encouragement to the Slave Trade. As he would be by far the ablest leader in the Soudan he could easily overturn the newly-erected political edifice, and become a formidable power.”

On his arrival at Cairo, General Gordon had a remarkable interview with Zebehr, who complained vehemently of the execution of his son and the confiscation of his property. At a Council, consisting of yourself, Nubar Pasha, Sir Evelyn Wood, General Gordon, and Colonel Stewart, held immediately after the interview, Lieutenant-Colonel Watson, Egyptian army, was asked what he thought of sending Zebehr and Gordon together to the Soudan. He answered that, not alone he himself, but natives thoroughly conversant with both men, were of opinion that such a policy would entail the death of one or other of them. A letter was then read from General

Gordon, in which he gave it as his opinion that Zebehr was far the ablest man in the Soudan ; that if he were sent up, the Mahdi would probably soon disappear ; and that, if it were thought advisable, he would go up with him, though thoroughly convinced that he was no friend of his.

At General Gordon's suggestion you informed Zebehr that he would be allowed to remain at Cairo, and that the future treatment he would receive at the hands of the Egyptian Government depended in a great measure upon whether General Gordon returned alive and well from the Soudan, and upon whether, whilst residing at Cairo, Zebehr used his influence to facilitate the execution of the policy upon which the Government had determined.

Notwithstanding this decision, General Gordon appears to have reconsidered the subject on his journey to Khartoum, and on his arrival at that place, on the 18th February, he proposed that, on his withdrawal from Khartoum, the British Government should appoint Zebehr as Governor of the Soudan, and give him "their moral support, but nothing more," taking from him certain engagements, and particularly one binding him not to go into Darfour or the Equatorial and Bahr Gazelle provinces.

In forwarding this recommendation for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, you expressed your concurrence in General Gordon's opinion, that it was desirable that he should leave behind him the man most likely to preserve some settled form of government at Khartoum ; and that, although there was no necessity to decide at once, you believed Zebehr to be the only possible man. You de-

scribed him as undoubtedly possessing energy, ambition, and great local influence; that you "would not on any account risk putting Gordon in his power;" and you did not recommend his being promised the moral support of the British Government.

Your conclusion was that, save from the point of view of English opinion, you saw no reason why Zebehr should not be proclaimed ruler of the Soudan, after General Gordon had arranged for the withdrawal of the garrisons and had left Khartoum, it being distinctly explained to him, in writing, that he must rely upon his own resources to maintain his position.

Her Majesty's Government at that time had no reason to suppose that there was any pressing necessity for the announcement of a successor to General Gordon, whose arrival at Khartoum had been welcomed by the people; and you were informed on the 22nd that there were the gravest objections to General Gordon's proposal that a successor to him should be appointed by the British Government; that Her Majesty's Government did not, as yet, see the necessity of a special provision for the government of the country beyond the policy indicated in General Gordon's Memorandum of the 22nd January, wherein he proposes to make over the country to the representatives of the different petty Sultans who existed at the time of Mehemet Ali's conquest; and that public opinion in England would not tolerate the appointment of Zebehr.

You communicated in reply to Her Majesty's Government to General Gordon, who, in his answer, expressed a decided opinion that, in order to secure the future quiet

of Egypt, it was necessary to subdue—or, to use his own expressive phrase, to “smash up”—the Mahdi; and that he could not suggest any other successor than Zebehr. In forwarding, on the 28th February, these opinions, you thus summed up the situation:—

“There are two courses to pursue. Either the Soudan may be evacuated, and no attempt made to establish any settled government there, or the best measures of which the circumstances admit may be taken to set up some form of government. General Gordon is evidently in favour of the latter course. I entirely agree with him. The attempt may not succeed, but I am very strongly of opinion that it should be tried. It will be a serious matter from every point of view, political, military, and financial, if complete anarchy reigns at Wady Halfa, and anarchy will certainly ensue when Gordon comes away, if some measures be not taken before hand to prevent it.”

. Your conclusion, in which Nubar Pasha agreed, was that the objections to Zebehr were overrated, and that he should be allowed to succeed Gordon with a sum of money to start with, and an annual subsidy for five years dependent upon his good behaviour, so that he might be able to maintain a moderate military force.

Her Majesty's Government on the perusal of General Gordon's advice were under the impression that he gave undue weight to the assumed necessity of an immediate evacuation of Khartoum, and they inquired whether it was urgent to make an arrangement at once to provide for his successor, expressing a hope that General Gordon would remain for some time. They were unwilling hastily

to negative the proposal to employ Zebehr, and you were therefore informed that the opinion you had expressed would be carefully weighed before deciding upon the subject.

You replied on the 4th March that General Gordon strongly pressed that Zebehr should be sent to Khartoum without delay, and that the combination at Khartoum of Zebehr with himself was an absolute necessity. "My weakness," he said, "is that of being foreign, and Christian, and peaceful, and it is only by sending Zebehr that this prejudice can be removed."

In consequence of the confidence expressed by General Gordon that Zebehr would not injure him, you withdrew the objection you had previously expressed to Zebehr being sent to join General Gordon at Khartoum, and supported his recommendation.

Up to this time Her Majesty's Government had entertained a hope that some other arrangement might have been made by General Gordon ; but having to determine whether Zebehr should be sent or not, and looking to the opinions so recently expressed by General Gordon and Colonel Stewart as to the danger of making use of him, which it is not necessary to recapitulate here, they replied on the 5th March that they had no information in their possession which led them to alter the impressions produced by those opinions, and that unless those impressions were removed, they would not be able to take the responsibility of authorizing the mission of Zebehr.

The telegrams subsequently received from you conveying further messages from General Gordon did not mate-

rially add to the considerations which had already been placed before Her Majesty's Government. The arguments in favour of employing Zebehr were stated with great force and ability by yourself and General Gordon. A strong conviction was expressed that his interest would prevent him from injuring General Gordon; that although he might have been concerned in stirring up the revolt of the tribes, there was no probability of his joining the Mahdi; and that his stay in Cairo must have taught him sufficient respect for British power to prevent him from entertaining any designs hostile to Egypt.

If reliance could safely have been placed upon Zebehr to serve loyally with General Gordon, to act in a friendly manner towards Egypt, and to abstain from encouraging the Slave Trade, the course proposed was undoubtedly the best which could have been taken under the circumstances; but upon this most vital point General Gordon's assurances failed to convince Her Majesty's Government. They felt the strongest desire to comply with his wishes, but they were bound, at the same time, to exercise their own deliberate judgment upon a proposal the adoption of which might produce such serious consequences.

They could not satisfy themselves of the probability that the establishment of Zebehr's authority would be a security to Egypt: on the contrary, his antecedents, and the opinions expressed only a few weeks ago by General Gordon and yourself as to his character and disposition, led them to the conclusion that it would probably constitute a serious danger to Egypt. There seemed to Her Majesty's Government to be considerable risk that Zebehr

might join with the Mahdi, or if he fought and destroyed him, that he would then turn against Egypt. The existence of an outbreak of Mussulman fanaticism was undoubted; but the Mahdi had not shown any personal qualifications which threatened to convert it into a military power and organization. To have let loose in the Soudan a Mussulman of undoubted ability and ambition, possessed of great military skill, and with a grievance against the Egyptian Government, appeared to Her Majesty's Government to be so perilous a course that they were unable to accept the responsibility of adopting it.

They were unable to share General Gordon's confidence, that Zebehr's blood feud with him involved no serious danger, and they felt that the opinion originally expressed by General Gordon, by the Council at Cairo, and by yourself, was more likely to be correct than the subsequent one. The chivalrous character of General Gordon appeared to be likely to lead him into the generous error of trusting too much to the loyalty of a man whose interests and feelings were hostile to him.

Besides these considerations affecting the interests of Egypt and the safety of General Gordon, Her Majesty's Government had further to consider how far it was probable that his authority might be exercised to renew the slave-hunting raids for which he was notorious.

The temptation to embark in such lucrative transactions would be great to himself, and there would be the additional risk that having to rely on the support of his former friends and dependents, the slave-hunters, he

would be obliged to purchase their support by connivance at their nefarious practices.

Her Majesty's Government understand the reasons which compelled General Gordon to announce that the property in slaves in the Soudan would be recognized; but this is a very different thing from using the authority of Great Britain to establish a notorious slave-hunter as ruler over that country. General Gordon indeed proposed that the Bahr Gazelle and Equatorial provinces should be excluded from Zebehr's rule, but England would have possessed no power to secure his adherence to such a stipulation.

These were the considerations which led Her Majesty's Government to address to you the instructions of the 13th instant.

Since that time, General Gordon's apprehension that the tribes would rise between Khartoum and Berber has been realized, and the communication between those places has been interrupted. On the other hand, the power of Osman Digna, apparently the most dangerous leader of the fanatical movement, has received a serious check, if it has not been altogether destroyed, by the victories of Sir Gerald Graham, which must produce a sensible effect upon all the tribes of the Eastern Soudan. General Gordon, so far as is known, is not in any immediate danger at Khartoum; and Her Majesty's Government are glad to learn from a communication addressed to you by General Gordon that he is ready to proceed with his task, with or without the assistance of Zebehr.

The observations which I have made in this despatch

are not intended to imply the slightest blame upon the manner in which you have discharged the arduous and responsible task of advising Her Majesty's Government under circumstances of extraordinary difficulty. It was your obvious duty to communicate your opinions to them in the plainest manner. You have discharged that duty faithfully and well. Her Majesty's Government are deeply sensible of the courage, patriotism, self-sacrifice, and devotion to duty which actuate General Gordon. They have felt no disposition to criticize, in any narrow spirit, the suggestions which, with his characteristic frankness, he has made from day to day as the most effectual way of meeting difficulties as they presented themselves to him. But Her Majesty's Government had to decide upon those suggestions to the best of their ability. They are fully sensible of the difficulty of the task, and, while they have been unable to agree with General Gordon and yourself upon this particular question, they are satisfied that the interests of Egypt and of Great Britain could not be entrusted to abler hands.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 14.

EXTRACT FROM GORDON'S MEMOIR OF ZEBEHR RAHAMA.

When Ibrahim Bey Fuzi was recalled from the Governorship of the Province of Bahr Gazelle, and removed to the Equatorial Districts, and when Idris Bey Abtar (?) was appointed Mudir of the province, and started from Khartoum for the seat of his Government with the neces-

sary stores and ammunitions, &c., the son of Zebehr marched against the place with his army, attacked it, and killed the soldiers and their officers. He took possession of the stores and ammunitions, including two guns, and made prisoners of the gunners. He then awaited the return of the troops he had sent to intercept Idris Bey Abtar, with orders to kill him and to capture his stores and ammunition.

Idris Bey hearing what had occurred, halted for four days at a place called Jur Ghattas, and then finally decided upon returning with what remained of his ammunition. A portion of it had been entrusted to a man who secretly sympathised with the rebels. He took another road, and delivered the stores to a party of the enemy, by whom they were removed to the zaribah of the son of Zebehr Pasha.

On receiving intelligence of what had occurred, and on the return of Idris Bey Abtar to Khartoum, we despatched troops under the command of Yusuf Pasha Hasan esh Shalali and of Gessi Pasha to the Bahr Gazelle, to suppress the disturbance, and to prevent its extension to other places, should it be the intention of the rebels, after the harvest season and the improvement of the roads, to extend their operations toward Shaka, and thence to Kordofan.

They reached a place called Dem Idris on the 23rd Zu'l Kadah, 1295, one-and-a-half day's journey from the place where the son of Zebehr was. The latter prepared himself for resistance, and openly assumed the character of a rebel. There occurred twelve battles between the

two armies, in all of which the rebels were defeated with heavy loss.

On the first day before the fighting commenced, the son of Zebahr hoisted his colours. One of the flag staves fell. They put it up again, and it fell a second time. They then brought a young boy, and slaughtered him on the spot. The flag staff broke. The Bazenkars and people of the Soudan were deeply impressed with the evil omen, and many deserted. Suleiman and the remainder of his people persevered in their rebellion and remained.

The first battle took place on the 1st Muharran, 1296. It commenced at the first hour of the day, and continued until the fourth hours and a half. The enemy fled after a loss of 2,300 killed and 200 prisoners. Of the soldiers of the Government, 14 suffered martyrdom, and seven men were wounded. Ten standards were captured from the enemy, and a quantity of muskets and *koratis* (cart-ridges?)

The rebels occupied themselves during the following night in the construction of a wooden wall (palisade or stockade ?) about 1,000 metres in length.

A second attack was made by the rebels after seven days, which commenced at the 8th hour. Fighting continued until the 11th hour, when the rebels were driven back into their intrenchments, with a loss of 300 killed and 70 prisoners. About 50 men of the Government troops suffered martyrdom.

The third battle.—The rebels attacked the Government troops, and fighting lasted from the third to the eighth hours of the day. They were defeated and fled. About

200 were killed and 20 taken prisoners. The loss on the side of the Government was nine men martyred and one wounded. The enemy took refuge among the trees, and then returned to their intrenchments.

The fourth battle.—The enemy on this occasion made his attack on two detachments, one on the right and the other on the left, the latter kept in concealment. This manœuvre was divulged by the scouts employed by the Government Army. A detachment was therefore placed in ambush, by which means this design of the enemy was frustrated. Fighting was continued from the 1st to 10th hours of the day. The two detachments of the enemy were not able to join one another even until night fall, when it was found that about 700 of the rebels were killed and 20 taken prisoners. 70 men of the Government troops suffered martyrdom.

The fifth battle.—A party of men drawing water at the wells was attacked, and troops were sent to their assistance. The rebels marked their ramparts, and a severe battle ensued, which lasted from the 7th to the 12th hours of the day. The enemy's loss was very heavy—about 1,000 killed; that of the Government troops was only four men wounded.

The sixth battle.—The rebels stationed outposts in ambush at a spot commanding the wells, which were about half-way between them and the Government troops. A detachment was sent against them, whereupon they fled, and no fighting ensued. Guards were placed by the Government troops over the wells.

The seventh battle.—Measures having been adopted to

cut off the enemy's access to the water and to the corn they required for their sustenance, they came forth and attacked the Government troops, but in less than two hours they were driven back into their intrenchments. The rebels had about 60 men killed, and the Government troops sustained no loss.

The eighth battle.—The enemy came forth in large numbers, but were beaten back with a loss of 70 men killed. About 60 of the Government troops suffered martyrdom.

The ninth battle.—A detachment of the rebel army came forth to supply their requirements by the plunder of the corn fields. They were driven back without having accomplished their object. 100 of the rebels were killed, and 70 of the Government troops fell martyrs.

The tenth battle.—The enemy was now suffering through want of water and provisions, and many of the Bazenkars deserted them and joined the Government troops. The rebels sallied forth from their intrenchments, and penetrated to the wells. They were driven back, but the fighting was very severe, and they continued to fight as they retreated to their fortifications. Twenty of the enemy were killed, and the loss of the Government army was ten men killed and five wounded.

The eleventh battle.—The rebels were now too completely discouraged to take the offensive. The Government troops occupied themselves from the 1st hour (morning) to the 2nd hour of the night in taking up a position in front of the line of intrenchments, and in closely besieging the enemy during the whole of the day. A strong

wall was constructed for the protection of the wells. Guns and *sarikhs* (rockets?) were brought forward, and a hot fire was opened from three different points on the enemy's lines. They suffered severely from the fire, from hunger and thirst, and at the 7th hour of the night they evacuated their position unperceived and retreated to their *dem*, whence they had originally made their advance. This did not become known until morning.

The twelfth battle.—On the flight of the enemy being discovered, the soldiers set out in pursuit with triumphant shouts of the profession of faith and *takbir* (Allah Akbar, God is most great !) for the victory of the Khedive over his enemies. At the 11th hour of the day they reached a place called Khur al Ghanam, when they halted and strengthened their position with wooden palisades. The enemy was at a distance of two hours' march. Next morning they attacked the rebels, but after two hours' fighting the latter turned and fled, pursued by the Government troops. The rebels tried to lie in ambush and surprise their pursuers, but their plans were revealed by the scouts. Fighting was continued as the rebels retreated, and the loss of the latter amounted to about 1,940 men killed, among whom were many of the leaders, such as Hamid, son of Mazmal, the commander of the rebel troops, and Othman, son of Tai Allah. The enemy scattered themselves in the forest and desert, and those that perished cannot be numbered. The Government troops reached the *dem*, and its walls were attacked with artillery. The rebels fled, and the guns and stores they left behind were seized.

The rebel chief Suleiman was reduced to one detach-

ment of followers, and I appointed a body of about 2,000 men fully armed to continue in pursuit. In the battle about 120 men of the Government troops suffered martyrdom, and 25 were wounded. It ended on the 5th Jamadi, Al Auli, 1296. In this battle and in the first the fighting was most severe.

No. 15.

MR. STURGE TO EARL GRANVILLE.

(Received March 10th.)

*British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society,
55, New Broad Street, London, March 10th, 1884.*

My Lord,

The rumours of the probable appointment of Zebehr Pasha as Governor of Khartoum and of the Eastern Soudan having of late increased in force and consistency, I have just now been instructed at a full Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to address you on this subject.

The antecedents of Zebehr Pasha are well known to your Lordship. In the records of the devastations and murders inflicted by the Slave Trade on North-eastern Africa this man has stood the foremost and the principal actor, and his career is specially marked by perfidy and crime. The Committee are unanimous in the feeling that countenance in any shape of such an individual by the British Government would be a degradation for England and a scandal to Europe.

The Committee express no opinion on the policy of a permanent maintenance of British authority at Khartoum,

but they earnestly hope that in the event of Her Majesty's Government making an arrangement for its independent rule, the conditions will be such as shall secure the country alike from a reign of anarchy and barbarism, and from that of the Slave-Trader.

As yet, however, the Committee are unable to believe that Her Majesty's Government will thus stultify that anti-slavery policy which has so long been the high distinction of England, or that they will thus discharge a trust which they have undertaken on behalf of the British people and of Europe.

I am, &c.,

On behalf of the Committee,

(Signed) EDMD. STURGE, *Chairman.*

No. 16.

COLONEL DUNCAN TO THE GENERAL OFFICER COMMANDING
THE TROOPS IN UPPER EGYPT.

Sir,

Korosko, July 28th, 1884.

I have the honour to forward, for your information and that of his Excellency the Sirdar, a detailed statement of the evacuation of the Soudan, carried out under my control between the 10th March, 1884, and the date of your arrival in Upper Egypt. I have during that period sent regular weekly Reports to Cairo, but in this, my final Report, I give a summary of the whole. This course will be convenient in case of reference.

1. *Instructions as to Procedure.*

My orders were briefly as follows, viz. :—

(a.) To discharge summarily and send to their homes

all soldiers of the Egyptian army who might be sent from the Soudan, having first settled with them pecuniarily.

(b.) To send away all army officers to Cairo with letters of explanation, and, as far as possible, to settle all their claims for arrears of pay.

(c.) To settle with and send to their homes all officers and men of the Bashi-Bazouks.

(d.) To settle with and send to Cairo all civil Government officials, with explanatory letters to the Bureau du Soudan.

(e.) To assist with biscuit and conveyance to their homes all poor refugees from the Soudan not in the service of Government.

(f.) To assist with passages to Cairo or their homes, but not with food, all refugees able to subsist themselves, but not able to obtain passages.

To these I added a self-imposed regulation, viz., of registering the names and numbers of all refugees from the Soudan who required no assistance in any way from Government. By this means I am able to give with accuracy the numbers who passed by the Nile from the Soudan into Egypt proper before the evacuation was suspended owing to the closing of the desert road between Abu Hamad and Korosko.

2. *Method of conducting the Evacuation.*

The first link in the chain was his Excellency Gordon Pasha at Khartoum, who dispatched the refugees, with all the available information, to Berber.

The second link was his Excellency the Governor of

Berber, assisted by Signor Cuzzi, Acting English Consular Agent, the latter of whom was very painstaking.

Next came my representative at Korosko, his Excellency Giegler Pasha, to whom I am greatly indebted, and lastly, at Assouan I myself carried out all the final details.

I was in telegraphic communication for a long time with Berber, and during the whole time with Korosko, thus being able to have ships, &c., ready, and to avoid all delay or congestion of traffic.

During the whole period I was very ably assisted by my Egyptian Brigade Major, Ahmed Effendi Fadhly, and a very excellent staff of Arab clerks from the Bureau du Soudan. I had also the co-operation, for a short time in succession, of the following English officers of the Egyptian army, viz., Captain Daubeny, Major Rundle, and Major Molyneux. I had depôts of biscuits at Korosko, Philœ, and Assouan.

I had full powers given me to issue passages by all the Government steamers on the Nile, and to give railway warrants on the Egyptian railways. I was also able, fortunately, to avail myself of returning troop-ships and barges for the conveyance of refugees as far as Assiout, where I found it cheaper. I hired dahabeahs between Assouan and Assiout, rationing the refugees with biscuit for the voyage.

Credits were opened for me at Assouan and Esneh to enable me to defray all the expenses of the evacuation, and a large sum of money having reached me to forward to his Excellency Gordon Pasha, after the road to Khar-toum was closed, I obtained permission to send it to Esneh as a farther source on which I might draw if necessary.

3. *Number of Refugees* (2,138).

The number of people of all professions and ages, and of both sexes, who have been passed through Assouan from the Soudan to their homes or to Cairo since the date of my arrival up to my leaving for Korosko has been 2,138; should the evacuation, which is now suspended, be resumed, you will be able, by means of this Report, to continue similar Tables of statistics to those which I have kept. I kept duplicate and very exhaustive Tables in Arabic, which you will find in possession of the Arab clerks left by me in Assouan. I would strongly recommend that you keep precisely similar Tables, as their value has been satisfactorily tested by references and inquiries made by the various Government Departments in Cairo.

The following Table may be found interesting, as showing the weekly rate of the evacuation up to the 27th May, when it practically terminated, the few who came from the Soudan since that date having escaped by Dongola and Wady Halfa, irrespective of any organization until they reached me at Assouan.

Number of refugees passed through Assouan :—

March 11 to 21	...	...	...	...	...	92
„ 21 to April 1	...	...	...	...	...	114
April 2 to 13	...	...	...	...	...	410
„ 14 to 19	...	...	...	...	...	203
„ 20 to 25	...	...	...	...	...	322
„ 26 to 30	...	...	...	...	...	209
May 1 to 8	...	...	...	...	...	240
„ 9 to 14	...	...	...	...	...	215
„ 15 to 20	...	...	...	...	...	114
„ 21 to 27	...	...	...	...	...	201
„ 28 to June 8	...	...	...	...	...	18
Total	...	...	...	...	...	2,138

4. *Proportion of Sexes among Refugees.*

Men and boys	...	...	...	...	...	1,178
Women and girls	...	...	...	...	...	960
						<hr/>
Total	...	...	...	...	...	2,138

Not a single death occurred among the female refugees, which, considering the hardships of the journey, speaks well for the care of the Executive.

Three deaths were reported of male refugees in the Korosko Desert.

5. *Proportion of Military and Civilian Elements.*

Officers and men of Egyptian Soudan army passed through	185
Bashi-Bazouks	... .. 155
Civilians and families of officers and of soldiers	... 1,798
Total	... .. 2,188

The number of soldiers would have been greater if his Excellency Gordon Pasha had not recalled from Berber all the men who had started for Egypt and who were fit for service.

The soldiers given in the Table were nearly all invalids, and a more wretched, broken-down set of men it would be hard to conceive.

6. *Number of Civilian Officials.*

Number of Government civilian officials, telegraph clerks, &c., passed through...	66
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Three Pashas in civil office, but with military rank, have been included among the 185 officers and men mentioned in the previous Table.

7. *Special Remarks on Proportions of Sexes, and Civil and Military Refugees, &c.*

Among refugees not mentioned in paragraphs 4, 5, 6 were a good many merchants, some Copts, and teachers, a few European priests and converts, and some prisoners released by Gordon Pasha at Khartoum.

But the most striking feature, to my mind, was the large family and retinue I generally found with Government officials.

Many had undoubtedly been slaves, but most had obtained their letters of freedom before they reached Assouan.

For those who had not, I procured these letters from the civil authorities.

I observed that the letters were always in the possession of the masters, and never of the servants, and I doubt if many of the latter knew of their existence, and they were quite indifferent when told of it.

But the size of the families and retinues was suggestive of very large incomes, which must have been enjoyed by the Egyptian officials in the Soudan.

8. *Local Arrangements at Assouan.*

I adopted the following system on arrival of the refugees from Korosko, from which place Giegler Pasha used to telegraph to me their departure :—

The vessels arrived at the village of Shellal, opposite Philœ Island, and at the south end of the Assouan Railway. Here I had a biscuit dépôt, and some large marquees for the women and children.

The men who wished might remain on board the boats till the vessels for Assiout were ready. If any (except soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks) wished to stay in Assouan at their own expense till the vessels were ready, I allowed them to do so. I did not allow the soldiers and Bashi-Bazouks to go to Assouan, as I did not wish them to have any intercourse with my young soldiers.

As soon as I had enough refugees to fill a steamer or dahabeah, I dispatched it down the river, with necessary orders to each for the railway at Assiout, to insure their conveyance home.

I had no trouble with the refugees, who all seemed most grateful and anxious to save me any labour. Although to some the evacuation was a happy release, yet to most it was the breaking up of their professional lives, and perhaps the beginning of a hard struggle for existence, and their cheerfulness and complacency cannot be too highly praised.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) F. DUNCAN, *Colonel,*

Commanding Troops in Wady Halfa and Korosko.

No. 17.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE WRECK OF THE STEAMER FROM KHARTOUM AND DEATH OF COLONEL STEWART.

The steamer struck a rock at the entrance to the Monassir cataracts, just below the island of Kanaïett, on the small island of Um-Dewermat. Stewart, Power, and the French Consul were on board. Stewart ordered the

spare ammunition to be thrown into the river, and, after spiking the small gun, threw it also into the river.

The inhabitants were at first much alarmed, and ran away, but Stewart sent the raïs Mohammed on shore to reassure them, and promised them peace. The natives sent word at once to Suleiman Wad Gamr, who came to the house of Etman Fakri, a blind man, living on the right bank of the river, who has considerable influence over Suleiman, and was his principal adviser during the subsequent proceedings.

Stewart ordered camels to be brought to take him and his party to Merawi. The camels were brought, and the baggage was brought on shore by the soldiers in a small boat, and the camels were being loaded, when Stewart ordered the Sheikh to come and receive full payment for them as far as Merawi.

Suleiman Wad Gamr had previously seen the raïs Mohammed, and found out from him who the party consisted of. He then promised him that his life should be spared if he would bring Stewart and the Consuls, unarmed, to his house.

On the receipt of the message from Stewart to come and receive the hire of camels, he replied to the effect that he was the Ruler of that part of the country, that he considered Stewart as his guest, and that if he would come and pay him a visit in his house, he would be very glad to receive him, and would then receive half the price of the camels as far as Merawi, the remainder to be paid on their safe arrival at Merawi.

Stewart started to go to the house, when he was met by a messenger to say that if he came with an armed party, or with arms, the Sheikh's people would run away, and requesting him to leave soldiers and arms behind. This was accordingly done, and Stewart, with Power and the French Consul, accompanied by their interpreter, the telegraph clerk, Hussein, went alone to the house of Etman Fakri.

They were well received, and supplied with dates and coffee. Suleiman went out and called in his men, who rushed in, shouting "surrender." Stewart gave up his pistol, and said he surrendered. The Consuls were then immediately attacked with swords. Stewart fought hard with only his fists, but was overcome. Hussein, the interpreter, caught hold of Etman and protected himself with his body from the blows made at him. He was severely wounded, but not killed. After Stewart and the Consuls had been killed, the party sallied out and surprised the soldiers, who were busy loading their camels. They rushed for the boat, which was upset. Two men of the Monassir were shot, and the Turkish soldiers were then dispatched as they came to the bank; the blacks and Dongolawi men being taken prisoners. The steamer was then looted, but was not otherwise damaged. The prisoners and papers found were sent to Berber.

Suleiman paid 400 of his men $1\frac{1}{2}$ dollars each, out of the money taken on the steamer, for their work.

(Signed) H. H. KITCHENER, *Major,*

Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General.

No. 18.

LETTER FROM GORDON TO LORD WOLSELEY.

*Dongola, November 14th, 1884.**"Khartoum, 4/11/84.*

"Post came in yesterday from Debbah, Kitchener, dated 14th October, cypher letter from Lord Wolseley, 20th September last, which I cannot decypher, for Colonel Stewart took the cypher with him.

"No other communications have been received here since 31st, letter which arrived 17th September, a week after Colonel Stewart's steamer left this. On other side are names of Europeans who went with Colonel Stewart in steamer. At Metammah, waiting your orders, are five steamers with nine guns.

"We can hold out forty days with ease; after that it will be difficult.

"Terrible about loss of steamer.

"I sent Colonel Stewart, Power, and Herbin down, telling them to give you all information.

"With Colonel Stewart was the journal of all events from 1st March to the 10th September. The steamer carried a gun and had a good force on board.

"The Mahdi is here, about eight miles away. All north side along the White Nile is free of Arabs; they are on south and south-west and east of town some way off; they are quiet.

"Senaar is all right and knows of your coming.

"With steamers are my journals from 10th September to date, with all details, and map of Berber.

"We have occasional fights with Arabs.

"Mahdi says he will not fight during this month, Moharram.

"With him are all the Europeans, nuns, &c. ; rumoured all are become Mussulman. Slatin is there ; Lupton, Mahdi says, has surrendered.

"Since 10th March we have had up to date, exclusive of Kitchener's, 14th October, only two despatches ; one, Dongola, with no date ; one from Suakin, 5th May ; one of some [P same] import, 27th April.

"I have sent out a crowd of messengers in all directions during eight months.

"Get the newspapers to say I received letters through Kitchener from Sir S. Baker, my sister, Stanley, from Congo. Do not send any more letters private, it is too great a risk. Do not write in cypher, for I have none, and it is of no import, for Mahdi knows everything, and you need not fear him.

"I should take the road from Ambukol to Metammah, where my steamers wait for you. Leontides, Greek Consul-General, Hanswell, Austrian Consul, all right.

"Stewart, Power, and Herbin went down in the 'Abbas.'

"A letter came from Mitzakis, the 31st July, from Adowa.

"The messenger had a letter from King for me, but Mahdi captured it. Please explain that to His Majesty.

"If journal is lost with Stewart we have no record of events from the 1st March to the 10th September, except a journal kept by doctor.

"Your expedition is for relief of garrison, which I

failed to accomplish. I decline to agree that it was for me personally.

"Stewart's journal was a gem, illustrated with all the Arabic letters of Mahdi to me, &c.

"You may not know what has passed here.

"The Arabs camped outside Khartoum on the 12th March. We attacked them on the 16th March; got defeated, and lost heavily, also a gun. We then from that date had continual skirmishes with Arabs. Stewart was wounded slightly in arm.

"On one occasion when river rose we drove off Arabs in three or four engagements, and fired their towns. Sent up to Senaar two expeditions; had another fight, and again was defeated with heavy loss, the square was always broken; this last defeat was on the 4th September; since then we have had comparative quiet. We fired 3,000,000 rounds.

"The Palace was the great place for the firing. Arabs have the Krupps here, and often have hulled our steamers. Arabs captured two small steamers at Berber, and one on Blue Nile. We have built two new ones, steamers. The steamers had bulwarks, and were struck with bullets 1,090 times each on an average, and three times with shot each. We defended the lines with wire entanglements, and live shells as mines, which did great execution. We put lucifer matches to ignite them.

"The soldiers are only half a-month in arrears. We issue paper money, and also all the cloth in magazines. All the captives with Mahdi are well; the nuns, to avoid an Arab marriage, are ostensibly married to Greeks. Slatin is with Mahdi, and has all his property, and is well treated;

but I hear to-day he is in chains. A mysterious Frenchman is with Mahdi, who came from Dongola.

"We have got a decoration made and distributed, with a grenade in centre; three classes : gold, silver, pewter.

"Kitchener says he has sent letters and got none in reply. I have sent out during last month at least ten. Steamer with this leaves to-morrow for Metammah.

"Do not let any Egyptian soldiers come up here; take command of steamers direct, and turn out Egyptian fellaheen.

"If capture of steamer with Stewart is corroborated, tell French Consul-General that Mahdi has the cypher he gave Herbin.

"Hassan Effendi, telegraph clerk, was with Stewart. You should send a party to the place to investigate affairs, and take the steamer."

On back, plan and following list of Greeks who were with Stewart in "Abbas:"—

Dimitri Kapnoulos.	Demosthenes Kapilos.
George Kepetzakos.	Dimitri Gourgo.
Herakli Bolonaki.	Paulos Xenophon.
Alex. Gemari.	Apostolios Georgios Tanizos.
Nazham Abogiri.	Jean Strizion.
Neseem Morines.	Nicolas Konbaros.
Dimitri Pediakis.	Jean Derentzakis.
Matuk Nomikos.	Michel Chatzi.
Stavros Papadakis.	Christo Doulkon.
Jean Proispireu.	



